

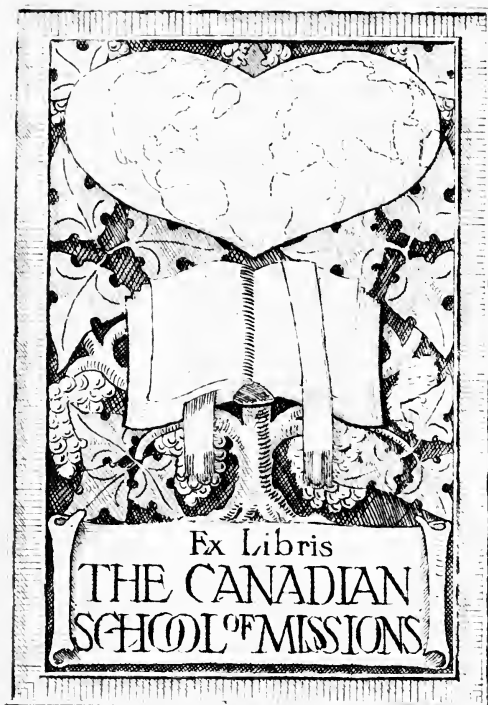




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PRESENTED TO  
THE CANADIAN SCHOOL OF MISSIONS  
BY THE ESTATE \*DR. J.W.L. FORSTER



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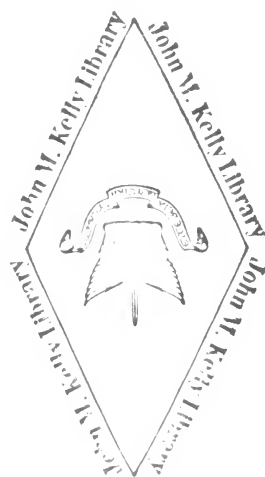




Photo 61

*Wander Bros., Ltd., Dublin.*

REV. HAMILTON MAGEE, D.D.,

LATE CHIEF-CLERK OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY'S DUBLIN MISSION



FIFTY YEARS  
IN  
“THE IRISH MISSION.”

BY THE  
REV. HAMILTON MAGEE, D.D.,

*Late Superintendent of the  
General Assembly's Dublin Mission.*



BELFAST: RELIGIOUS TRACT AND BOOK DEPOT  
EDINBURGH: RELIGIOUS TRACT AND BOOK SOCIETY



## PREFATORY NOTE.

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I HAVE very gratefully to acknowledge the valuable assistance received from many Christian friends during the preparation of the following pages. I feel specially called on to mention the names of Rev. Samuel Prenter, D.D., Dublin; (the late) Rev. Matthew Kerr, Cork; Rev. George MacFarland, B.A., Belfast; Rev. F. S. Gardiner, M.A., Kingstown; Rev. Thomas Connellan, Dublin; Rev. Thomas Lyle, M.A., Dublin. Had it not been for important literary help generously rendered me by Rev. W. T. Latimer, B.A., Eglisch, Dungannon, and Rev. John A. Bain, M.A., Westport, I do not see how this little volume could have ever made its appearance.



## PREFACE.

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THE REV. HAMILTON MAGEE, D.D., was one of the most devoted and distinguished Missionaries the Presbyterian Church ever sent into the Irish Field. The following narrative from his own pen is of first-rate importance as a contribution to the general history of the Mission, and as a record of events which might very easily have become indistinct in the memory of the Church, or have passed altogether into oblivion. It is matter for thankfulness to God that though the author was not spared to see the sheets through the press, or to give to his work those finishing touches which his fastidious mind would have spared no pains to impart, he was, nevertheless, able to complete his narrative, and leave at the time of his lamented death his manuscript practically ready for publication.

It was not, however, as a mere contribution to history that in his declining days Dr. Magee undertook the duty of writing this book. His object was to

render a service to the Mission which he loved in the only way that was left to him; to present its principles in a concrete form, and to illustrate its spirit in the outlines of a personal narrative. The beautiful story before us is at once an exposition, a vindication, and a plea. The Irish Mission of the Presbyterian Church, as it exists at present, bears the stamp of Dr. Magee's constructive genius, and in all its outstanding features it has been moulded into shape by his capable hand. Probably the very easiest way to understand the scope and design of the Mission is to read the following narrative. Certainly the best way to vindicate the Mission is to recount its achievements, and the best way to enkindle the sympathies of the Church on its behalf is to chronicle its vicissitudes. All through life Dr. Magee had laboured hard to set the whole subject in a clear and true light before the eye of the Church. As soon as he had been released from active service, in consequence of failing health, he set himself to devote whatever strength and time might be left to him to this cherished object. Often and often in the performance of this self-imposed task, through the recurrence of disease, the pen had to be laid aside. Then, when strength returned, he would take it up

again, and it was only amid the fluctuations and flickerings of life that the closing chapters were written. He hoped and yearned that he might be spared to see the volume published; but God decreed it otherwise, as the end came soon after the last sentences were written, and the volume now passes into the hands of the public, not merely as the memorial of the Mission, but as the touching and eloquent memorial of the deceased Missionary, one of the noblest, one of the most consecrated, and one of the most gifted that the Irish Presbyterian Church has ever produced.

And, after all, it is as the memorial of the man that we shall all most prize it. Its chief value and its preserving savour lie just in that element which its author never thought of, viz., in its unconscious and unpremeditated portraiture of the author himself. To those who knew him intimately there is no difficulty in recognising Dr. Magee in this little volume. His strongly marked individuality was such that it could not be hid. The compact sentences are his, and the style of limpid clearness. The generous discriminating estimate of others, and the shy references to himself, the pungency of spirit, the mirthfulness which is here and there allowed to peep out of the paragraphs, the

strong love of truth and fact, the warm heart and irrepressible hope, which pervade the book throughout, are strongly characteristic of the man, and are readily recognizable by those who knew him. To those who knew him not the portrait may appear dim, and may convey an inadequate impression. Certainly it falls far short of the original, and the book can present only a suggestion, and at best only a very imperfect image of its author. Far better than anything he ever wrote, or anything he ever did, was the man himself—that delightful personality whom it was a privilege to know, and with whom in the pressure of life's duties it was an inspiration to associate. His literary executor, so far as this volume is concerned, the Rev. John A. Bain, M.A., of Westport, was selected by himself. In the filial and sympathetic manner in which Mr. Bain has discharged the duty he has laid Dr. Magee's friends under a lasting debt of obligation.

Amongst Dr. Magee's papers was found after his death the modest epitaph, written with his own hand, which he wished to be inscribed on his tombstone, "HE LIVED FOR IRELAND." He loved Ireland and her people as few men have ever done. He had made a profound study of Irish history, and he was familiar, in



all its lights and shadows, with Irish character. He believed that great possibilities lay hidden and crushed in the Irish heart. He believed that the day of Ireland's Regeneration would certainly come, and that it was the duty of all who loved Christ in Ireland to labour earnestly to usher in its dawn. He believed that the chief enemy of Ireland was the despotic Ecclesiastical System which is centralised in Rome, and that until that system was broken no great progress could be made in the direction of prosperity, or enlightenment, or liberty. He believed that God had planted the Presbyterian Church in Ireland for high spiritual ends, and that she possessed a message which would be fraught with blessings to the whole land, and that it was her first duty to deliver that message in love and loyalty to the Irish people. These convictions lay at the basis of his career, and moulded and uplifted his character. A passion for Irish Mission work burnt like a fire in his bones. The record before us tells the story, and the epitaph he wrote suitably epitomises it. **HE LIVED FOR IRELAND.**

Ireland remains the chief care of the Irish Presbyterian Church, and the first field of her missionary responsibilities. Notwithstanding the labours of past generations,

and the manifest signs of improvement in many directions, the dark cloud of Romanism still casts its baleful shadow over two-thirds of the population. But the light is steadily increasing. Here and there we discern serious rifts in the cloud. Educated Romanists are themselves up in arms against the fearful ecclesiastical oppression. We must not fail nor be discouraged. Though the time of emancipation may seem to linger, and the bright light of Gospel freedom may seem long in coming, still it is ours to persevere in the plain duties of the Mission, to watch and pray for fresh openings, to sow the seed beside all waters, to show our love for our own land by spreading therein God's great message of peace and good-will, and to bring about the time when "the plowman shall overtake the reaper" and God will say of His Irish people: "I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the Lord your God." For an Irish Evangelical Church, there could be no more delightful watchword than the adaptation of our great Missionary's epitaph:

"SHE LIVES FOR IRELAND."

SAMUEL PRENTER,

*Convener of the General Assembly's Irish Mission.*

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 ERRATA.

P. 56—For "See Note P," read "See Note F."

P. 63—For "See Note H," read "See Note J."

P. 118—Omit Reference, in Footnote, to Note N.

# Fifty Years in the "Irish Mission."

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## CHAPTER I.

### A PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

I FEEL it due to my readers, and indeed to myself, that I should state at the outset the circumstances under which this unpretending narrative—it is mainly a narrative—has been written.

Very special, I might almost say, very exceptional, opportunities have been accorded me in the Providence of God of studying a Missionary Problem which all admit to be difficult, and not a few pronounce to be insoluble—namely, "How hopefully to carry on evangelical work among our Irish Roman Catholic fellow-countrymen."<sup>1</sup> Since I entered the

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<sup>1</sup> I am well aware that any effort in the direction indicated is looked upon by many as necessarily offensive and mischievous, especially in a country like Ireland. It is not strange that Roman Catholics should hold this opinion, though in doing so they are unmindful of the fact that their own Church, from the very nature of its claims, is the most aggressive Missionary organization in the world. A great many Protestants also, in not a few cases under the influence of high and honourable motives, entertain the same view. Should these pages come under the notice of any such readers, I would ask to refer them specially to Chapters XVII. and XVIII., in which what I have called the "principles" of our Mission are briefly explained. There *is* a way (alas! too common in Ireland) of attempting work of this kind which, while it vastly aggravates the difficulties of the work itself, raises against it an almost universal and most just prejudice.

Christian Ministry upwards of fifty years ago, I have been connected with what is called the "Irish Mission" of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. In this position the responsibility was thrown upon me of devoting myself to the practical consideration of this great subject. I can truly say that I made it the engrossing study of my life; and, as the years rolled on, a sense of its immense and far-reaching importance, especially to a Church situated as ours is, took possession of my inmost being.

Upwards of ten years ago my health broke down so seriously that I was obliged to withdraw almost wholly from public service. During my enforced retirement many Christian friends, deeply interested in Irish evangelization, urged me to write were it only a brief outline of my experience in this department of work. I have tried to comply with this request. No one can be so conscious as I am of the incomplete and fragmentary character of the statement submitted in the following pages. I can only say that in the circumstances I could do no better. I had contemplated a different treatment of the entire subject, dealing more with principles, and somewhat less with narrative. I found, however, that I could not carry out my original design. Some of the weightiest questions raised in connection with the Irish religious problem—questions which I should have greatly liked to discuss—I have been able to refer to only incidentally.

#### HOW I WAS LED TO JOIN THE IRISH MISSION.

It may give greater interest to what follows if I state in a few words how I was led at first to



connect myself with this branch of the Church's work.

Towards the close of my last Session at Belfast College (1847-48), it pleased God to visit me with a severe attack of typhus fever, at that time very prevalent in Ireland. For several weeks my life was almost despaired of, my recovery being ultimately due, under God, to the rare skill and untiring attention of an eminent physician not long since deceased.<sup>1</sup> During the delirium of fever, I had a kind of vision the details of which I cannot now recall; but it helped to fasten a strong conviction in my mind that I should be spared, and spared to work in some undefined way for Ireland. As I regained consciousness, I was filled with gratitude and wonder when I ascertained that during the whole course of my illness a number of my college comrades had frequently met to bear me in the arms of their loving intercession before the Throne of Grace.

If this page should fall under the eye of John Hall (now the Rev. Dr. Hall, of New York),<sup>2</sup> he will pardon the liberty I take in reproducing some lines written by him when my life seemed to be trembling in the balance. They may, perhaps, have escaped his memory: they shall never fade from mine:—

---

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Seaton Reid.

<sup>2</sup> This reference was written previous to the lamented death of my life-long and greatly honoured friend. I venture to leave it as I wrote it.

## PRAYER.

*Joshua x. 12.*

“ ‘Thou sun that from Gibéon's height  
Dost rule declining day ;  
Thou moon, within Ajalon's vale,  
May God thy progress stay !’

“ So Joshua prayed. Sudden the sun's  
Fleet downward course was stayed :  
Checked by the same Almighty hand,  
The moon like dalliance made.

“ The willing sun in heaven stood still,  
Prolonged the unequal light,  
As though in wonder lost to see  
God for His people fight.

“ Thus would He teach His servants then  
To trust in His great power ;  
Nor rest upon an arm of flesh  
In danger's dreadful hour.

“ Speaks not the miracle to us ?  
Yes ; but how dull the ear  
Of man unto the voice of God—  
How slow we are to hear !

“ Speaks not the miracle to us ?  
Yes : read the lesson there—  
The Hand that moves the sun and moon  
Is moved by fervent prayer.”

“ CLASSFELLOW.”

At the beginning of the Session a few of us had formed a small private gathering, which met weekly, for the study of the Word and prayer, in the lodging

of one of our members. I was affectionately remembered by them during my illness. A list<sup>1</sup> lies before me, in the handwriting of John Orr (who, as if by a common instinct, was selected to act as our secretary),<sup>2</sup> containing the names of the members of this little company. It was made out at the close of the Session of 1848, when we had met for special thanksgiving and dedication before proceeding to our respective destinations. There can be no breach of confidence now in giving these names. They were the following:—John Barnett, James Foster, John Hall, Matthew Kerr, Thomas Young Killen, Hamilton Magee, James Morton, James Newell, John Orr, James Robinson, James Shannon. We undertook to remember one another in prayer every Saturday evening, and I have reason to know that this sacred pledge was long faithfully kept. The majority of these brethren afterwards engaged in the work in Connaught.<sup>3</sup>

I gradually recovered, as I have always believed, in answer to prayer. My very intimate friend, Thomas Young Killen, who had been in Connaught the previous summer in connection with Dr. Edgar's work there, found access to my sick room almost before anyone else. He proposed to me that I should go to Connaught; urging that Matthew Kerr

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. Hall afterwards got a number of lithograph copies of this list taken in New York. (I see that Dr. Thomas Hall has reproduced a *fac-simile* copy in the memoirs of his father—November, 1901.)

<sup>2</sup> He was afterwards for many years the efficient Clerk of the General Assembly.

<sup>3</sup> I am now, since the death of the Rev. John Barnett, at Katesbridge, on the 18th November, 1901, the sole survivor of this little band of brothers.

and he had agreed to join the Mission there, *provided I should accompany them*. So far as I know, no such idea had, previous to my illness, occurred to me; and I was not able, especially in the circumstances, to commit myself off-hand to any positive engagement. But, as all who knew him can well understand, my friend was persistent, and I was at least not hostile. At length I so far yielded as to promise that if I regained sufficient strength to pass the necessary Examination for Licence (of which I was very doubtful), and there appeared to be in the meantime no other clear indication of God's will as to present duty, I would accompany him and Matthew Kerr to the West. Further than this I could not go. A rumour, however, soon obtained wide circulation that three young men, who had just left college, "had given themselves *for life* to the Connaught Mission!" Some such statement was made (I know in absolutely good faith) by a venerable deputy from our Church when addressing the Free Church Assembly in Edinburgh. On the day on which I was licensed, Dr. Morgan, my pastor, who had had great influence in originally inclining my thoughts towards the Christian Ministry, and who had taken a very deep interest in me during my whole College career, before we left the upper vestry of Fisherwick Place Church, in which the solemn service had been held, suggested that I should go and preach in a congregation in which he took a deep interest, and which was at that time vacant. I thanked him very much for his kind proposal, but said I could not possibly comply with it without first having an interview with Dr. Edgar, the Convener of the

Home Mission,<sup>1</sup> the belief having become general that I had bound myself to go to the West. Dr. Morgan there and then offered to accompany me in my visit to Dr. Edgar. We found him at home in the old Manse in Albert Street. "I want Hamilton," said Dr. Morgan, "to go and preach as a candidate in——." "Well," said Dr. Edgar, with the prompt and blunt decision which was so familiar to those who were thrown into personal intercourse with him, "if he wishes to ruin himself, and us too, he should go; but it has been reported everywhere that he is going to Connaught." I at once said to Dr. Morgan, "In that case, I go to Connaught." I am not sure that my good friend Dr. Morgan saw the necessity as clearly as it seemed to present itself to me. Be that, however, as it may, the little incident referred to determined my entire subsequent career as an Irish Missionary. There was throughout the whole transaction almost no choice, or even predilection, of my own. I felt absolutely shut up to the obligation of joining my two dear brothers, Killen and Kerr, in this as yet somewhat experimentary field of Missionary enterprise. By other, but, as I thought, not less decisive indications of duty, I afterwards felt constrained to remain at the work into which I had thus been led. After a brief experience, the conviction took complete hold of me that this Mission to our Celtic<sup>2</sup> fellow-

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1. At that time the "Home Mission" included what is now called the "Irish Mission."

<sup>2</sup> This use of the word will not satisfy ethnologists, but it is sufficiently accurate for my purpose.

countrymen had supreme claims on the Irish Presbyterian Church, and that, owing to a variety of circumstances such as I have referred to, it had irresistible personal claims on *me*. Rightly or wrongly, I regarded myself as called of God to this special sphere of labour; and through the following years—all of them marked by struggle, many of them by discouragement, and some of them, it may be, by failure—I never for one moment wavered in the belief that I was at the work and in the place to which the Master Himself had graciously designated me. Had it not been for the strength and courage which this conviction imparted, I should not now, in my declining years, have the privilege of asking the indulgent interest of my readers—my younger readers especially—in these broken Memories and Lessons in a long Missionary life.

## CHAPTER II.

### EARLY HISTORY OF THE CONNAUGHT MISSION.

I HAD hoped, before entering on any statement regarding my own Missionary experiences, to present a brief historical outline of the work done by our Church in former years for the spiritual instruction of the native Irish population, going back as far as I could obtain information in the direction of the Ulster Plantation. I find, however, that the subject is so large, and involves so many details, that it could not be satisfactorily treated here. The accounts of these older efforts are, for the most part, buried in records which are practically inaccessible to the public. It is due, however, to many sacred interests that means should be taken to keep them fresh in the grateful memory of the Church.<sup>1</sup> I must confine myself almost wholly to that part of the work with which I was personally connected, premising some remarks on the circumstances which more immediately led to the establishment of the "Connaught Mission," as it came to be popularly designated.

### BEFORE THE FAMINE.

Several years ago, the Dublin *Freeman's Journal*,

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<sup>1</sup> The Rev. W. T. Latimer, B.A., author of *A History of the Irish Presbyterians*, has devoted much time to the investigation of this subject, bringing to it his well-known faculty of painstaking inquiry. It is to be hoped that he will find himself encouraged to publish a full account of his researches in this interesting field.

then in the zenith of its enormous influence, in reviewing a letter which had appeared in our *Missionary Herald*, asserted that the "Connaught Mission," of which the Presbyterians seemed to be so boastful, originated in the desolation wrought by the Famine of 1846-47; these Northern proselytizers having taken base advantage of the hunger pangs of a starving population, rushing in with a platter of meal in one hand and a Protestant Bible in the other, in order to "convert" them to the cruel creed of Geneva. I am not sure that I have not heard views somewhat similar expressed by objectors claiming connection with our own ecclesiastical fold. By whomsoever the objection may be made, it is contrary to fact. Our Western Mission had made most hopeful progress before the baleful shadow of the Great Famine swept across the land. This statement might be demonstrated at length; but I shall refer only to three influences that were at work before the Famine, each of which bore directly on the final establishment of the "Connaught Mission":—(1) *The Missionary Synod*, Dublin, 1833; (2) *The Irish Schools* (associated with the name of the Rev. Robert Allen); (3) *The Students' Missionary Association* (associated with the name of the Rev. Michael Brannigan).

#### I. THE DUBLIN MISSIONARY SYNOD, 1833.

This memorable meeting occupies a much more important place in the history of our Missions, and especially of our Home Missions, than has been generally recognised. It was a throb of the new life which at this time had begun to show itself in



a thousand ways throughout the Synod of Ulster. At the stated meeting of Synod held in Cookstown during the previous July it was resolved that "a special meeting of Synod be held in Mary's Abbey, Dublin,<sup>1</sup> upon the second Wednesday in September, for the purpose of considering the best means of carrying forward and extending the Missionary operations of this Church." The Synod had not yet got abreast of the immense enterprise of Foreign Missions, and although the Presbytery of Dublin was requested "to prepare a plan for the formation of a Foreign Missionary Society," the main strength of the meeting was given to the special claims of the Home field. "This meeting," said one of the speakers, "is the first on record of a whole Church, by her representatives, met to devise and adopt measures for disseminating the Gospel throughout the length and breadth of Ireland." The Rev. Moses Finlay, Moderator for the year, presided. Dr. Cooke, then in his prime, preached a sermon on "The Peculiar Doctrines of the Gospel," which was a splendid exhibition and vindication of the orthodox position to which the Synod was now definitely committed. Mr. (afterward Dr.) Bellis read the Annual Home Mission Report of the Synod. The other speakers delivered sermons and speeches characterized by earnest missionary zeal and lofty Christian patriotism. A notable feature of the proceedings was the presence from the Church of Scotland of the Rev. Duncan Macfarlane, of Renfrew,

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<sup>1</sup> It was the first meeting of the Synod of Ulster ever held in Dublin.

and Dr. Norman MacLeod, of Campsie,<sup>1</sup> father of the still more widely-known Dr. Norman MacLeod, Barony Church, Glasgow, and of Dr. Donald MacLeod, the present accomplished editor of *Good Words*. In a devout and impassioned address, Dr. MacLeod, himself a distinguished Gaelic scholar, urged upon the Synod the more systematic use of the Irish language. In order to help the Synod in this distinctively Irish work, he expressed his willingness to spend some time in the West of Ireland, with the view of ascertaining how far the Scottish Gaelic was available for Irish evangelism;<sup>2</sup> and he also offered to undertake the responsibility of translating into Irish and putting through the Press a metrical version of the Psalter, somewhat similar to the Gaelic Psalter which had proved so acceptable and useful in the Highlands of Scotland. This proposal was subsequently carried out by him in the most generous manner.<sup>3</sup> The whole story is full of delightful and stimulating interest. The Missionary Synod was, without doubt, "a forward movement" of the most benign promise in the history of the now revived Church. The writer of the Preface to *Missionary Sermons and Speeches*<sup>4</sup> is able to bear the following testimony:—

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<sup>1</sup> These brethren had come from Scotland for the express purpose of attending the meeting.

<sup>2</sup> See Note A.

<sup>3</sup> See Note B.

<sup>4</sup> The Synodical proceedings were published in a separate volume under the above title. (Belfast: W. M'Comb, 1834). The book is now out of print. Copies are preserved in the College Libraries in Belfast and Derry, and in the Assembly's Dublin Mission Library. There is strong evidence that the Preface was written by the Rev. (afterwards Dr.) W. B. Kirkpatrick, of Mary's Abbey, Dublin.

“On all sides we see much thankfulness and joy. The Synod of Ulster, we rejoice to say, are taking a prominent share in the heart-stirring operations of the present times. They have made a more decisive advancement in spiritual life and power within the last few years than in the previous half century. . . . Presbyterianism in this country has reached a new era in its history. We do assuredly expect that the Synod of Ulster will not disappoint the hopes which this late meeting has universally excited in the public mind . . . until, in the words of the celebrated resolutions drawn up by the Irish masters at Kingscourt,<sup>1</sup> ‘Scripture knowledge reach our most remote valleys; Scriptural light illumine our darkest mountains, and the Bible of God become the ornament of the Irish cabin.’”

## II. THE IRISH SCHOOLS.

As far as I have been able to ascertain, the employment of the Irish School system as an organized department of our Presbyterian Home work<sup>2</sup> may be directly traced to this Missionary Synod. The agency had been in extensive use in the then Established Church since 1818, when the “Irish Society” was formed for the purpose of “promoting the Scriptural education and religious instruction of

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<sup>1</sup> A work which at the time excited great attention was carried on in this district by the “Irish Scriptural School Society,” a branch of the “Irish Society” (Episcopal). The Rev. Robert Winning, our minister at Ervey, was local superintendent. Mr. Winning afterwards joined the Episcopal Church.

<sup>2</sup> This remark applies only to *Schools*. Irish-speaking agents, ministers, and others had been employed from an early period in our history.

the Irish-speaking population, chiefly through the medium of their own language." The work of this admirable society was mainly carried on through the instrumentality of Irish schools. Stirring statements were made in the Dublin Synod as to the remarkable success of this agency in different parts of the country. It seems to have fallen to the lot of the REV. ROBERT ALLEN, minister of the First Presbyterian Church, Stewartstown, who was present at the meeting, though, apparently, taking no part in the proceedings, to translate into practical action some of the valuable suggestions which had been made, especially on the subject of vernacular schools. We accordingly find him applying in the following year (November, 1834)<sup>1</sup> to the Mission Directors for leave to establish schools in the mountains of Tyrone and Derry. The request was "readily granted." In 1835, the year in which, as Dr. Killen is careful to notice, the Synod of Ulster "completed its doctrinal reformation" by requiring subscription to the *Confession of Faith*, 30 Irish schools were already at work, with 1,400 pupils under instruction. In 1842 the number had increased to 200 teachers, with an attendance of 10,000 pupils. From the year 1835 till 1848, when he was appointed by the General Assembly Superintendent of the Connaught Mission,

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<sup>1</sup> About one-half of the Irish people are said to have spoken Irish at this time. In the first number of *The Missionary Herald* (1843) it is stated that about 3,000,000 persons used the native language. *The Missionary Herald* is the monthly missionary magazine of the Irish Presbyterian Church. For the sake of brevity it will be referred to in subsequent notes as *M. H.*

Mr. Allen gave his unstinted services to the Church as the "voluntary, gratuitous, and, in every sense of the word, unpaid agent of the (Synod's and) Assembly's Irish schools."<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Edgar was wont to say that the Irish schools over a large district of Ulster "owed their origin to the fact of a beggar having found an Irish Testament by the wayside;" and that "those of Connaught might be traced to a single Bible which an English sportsman presented to a peasant." "This Bible," it is said, "soon came into great respect in a district (of Connaught) where nothing of the kind had been previously seen. One and another and another still borrowed the wonderful book, and neighbours gathered round the winter hearth to listen to its marvellous tales. Three connections of the man who first got it came out from Romanism; one of them is the inspector of the Irish school system over a large district, and the brother of another teacher in an Irish school."<sup>2</sup> Dr. Edgar probably got this story regarding the Connaught Bible from the "inspector" referred to, who must have known the circumstances. Mr. Allen seems at first sight to give a different account; but the two statements may be quite compatible. In an article from his own pen which appeared in the *Irish Presbyterian*, March, 1853, Mr. Allen writes as follows:—"The introduction of our Church to the Mission field of Connaught was brought to pass by one of those events which the world calls accidents, but which

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<sup>1</sup> *M. H.*, October, 1844, p. 168.

<sup>2</sup> *Cry from Connaught*, published in the *M. H.*, November, 1846, p. 378.

form often very important links in the Providence of God. An unexpected letter, from a person unknown, to the Missionary Agent [Mr. Allen himself] of the Synod of Ulster drew his attention to Mayo, and brought him to Killala. The establishment of Irish schools was the result of his visit."<sup>1</sup>

The genuine Irish School was a somewhat anomalous institution.<sup>2</sup> Most of the teachers employed were avowed Roman Catholics, no others, as a rule, being available ; their work in teaching the Irish Bible was tested by periodical examinations, and the pecuniary remuneration of the teachers was determined by the ascertained results. The Roman Catholic clergy at first offered but little opposition to an unpretending agency like this, which at any rate possessed the advantage of scattering some Protestant silver among their needy parishioners. It is said, indeed, that a few good souls among the priests at first actually attended as pupils. But it was an important testimony to the influence of the system that it speedily aroused the most furious ecclesiastical opposition. In 1845 it was officially reported that "during the preceding nine years above 17,000 adults had been taught to read the Holy Scriptures in the Irish tongue."<sup>3</sup> The work was certainly full of missionary romance. It developed splendid instances of Christian heroism,

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<sup>1</sup> See also an important letter from Mr. Allen in the *Orthodox Presbyterian* for 1838, edited by Dr. Samuel Davidson, pp. 27-30.

<sup>2</sup> See Note C.

<sup>3</sup> *Sketch of the Irish Schools* (General Assembly). Belfast : *Banner of Ulster* Office, 1845.

and its entire history was marked by incidents of pathetic and sacred interest. Anyone, however, who is even moderately acquainted with average human nature, and especially with human nature under the tutelage of Irish Romanism, will admit that in certain aspects the agency was a very hazardous one. It claimed, at the best, to be, as Dr. Edgar expressed it, but "the offspring of necessity."<sup>1</sup> In spite of the most stringent supervision on the part of Mr. Allen and his not inconsiderable staff of licentiates and theological students, there were undoubted abuses which could not possibly be guarded against. Dr. Edgar was constrained to say in his Home Mission Report to the Assembly in 1851:—"The whole system of Irish Schools has been proved to be replete with difficulty;" and he proceeded to describe it as "an imperfect agency, and a system notoriously exposing to deception and imposition." In 1852, in still stronger language, he refers to "withering disappointments arising from the baseness of those who made professions only to deceive. We desire," he says, "to hold forth our own dear-bought experience as a warning to all."<sup>2</sup> There are still among us those who think that this agency should never have been abandoned; and in view of the great good undoubtedly accomplished by it, I have oftentimes been inclined to entertain the same view. It is certain, however, that while preparing the way for other and more permanent methods, the system failed to secure the confidence of our

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<sup>1</sup> *M. H.*, 1851, p. 933.

<sup>2</sup> *M. H.*, 1852, p. 1053.

Christian people, and that it left a legacy of distrust in the minds of many as to the integrity of our entire work among our fellow-countrymen.

### III. THE STUDENTS' MISSIONARY ASSOCIATION.

The formation of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland in 1840 by the union of the Synod of Ulster and the Secession Synod was accompanied by a missionary revival which at once lifted Irish Presbyterianism into an evangelistic position such as it had never before occupied. Our Church historians are careful to give prominence to the fact that this auspicious event was largely promoted by the Divinity Students belonging to the two Synods. Dr. Killen states that the "first very decided movement in favour of the Union" was made by the candidates for the Ministry in attendance on the Collegiate classes connected with the Belfast Academical Institution.<sup>1</sup> Their United Prayer Meeting was, in fact, the birthplace of the proposed union. The "Connaught Mission" originated a few years later in the same prayer meeting. In February, 1845, it was suggested that the members should form themselves into a Missionary Association. This suggestion, which first came, as far as I can remember, from an Irish Divinity student then attending the New College, Edinburgh, met with a cordial response. The First Report of the new Association appears in the *Missionary Herald* for March, 1846, and it records the following resolutions as having been unani-

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<sup>1</sup> *History of the Presbyterian Church*, iii., p. 475. (Mullan's Edition.).



mously adopted :—" 1st, That we send a Missionary to the Irish-speaking population of the South and West of our country ; 2nd, That we shall be guided by the Directors of the General Assembly's Home Mission as to the particular locality in which he may labour ; and 3rd, That we raise his salary partly by our own subscriptions, and partly by collections from friends." The Report goes on to say :—" Two inquiries came before us : 1st, Who will go for us ? and 2nd, When shall he go ? As to the first, there was no difficulty. There was only one man possessed of the requisite qualifications. We wanted a person whose ' heart was right in the sight of God ; ' who could speak the Irish language ; had finished his College course ; and had not already been engaged by the Assembly. All these, we believed, were to be found in Mr. M. Brannigan, Licentiate of the Presbytery of Tyrone, and we had no hesitation in offering him the appointment."<sup>1</sup> With regard to the second question, there was no difference of opinion. The Association resolved to send him immediately. *These resolutions may be said to have constituted the formal inauguration of the " Connaught Mission."*<sup>2</sup> The report is signed by " H. B. Wilson," now so well known as the venerable Dr. Hamilton Brown Wilson. He has

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<sup>1</sup> It was at Mr. Allen's suggestion that the students appointed Mr. Brannigan their first missionary. Killen's *Memoir of Dr. Edgar*, p. 200.

<sup>2</sup> The Irish Divinity Students, Edinburgh, joined in the movement, and for a time the Glasgow Irish Students, also Students of Queen's College, Belfast. Ultimately the name of the Society came to be " Belfast and Edinburgh (Irish) Students' Missionary Association."

had many honours, but he has had none higher than this—that he was the first Secretary of the Students' Missionary Association.<sup>1</sup>

#### THE REV. MICHAEL BRANNIGAN.

Considering the very important part he took in the establishment and advocacy of the Mission, Mr. Brannigan is entitled to very special notice. He may be said to have represented in his own person the three important factors already referred to—the Irish School Agency; its honoured Superintendent, the Rev. Robert Allen; and the Students' Missionary Association. His father and he, originally devout Roman Catholics, had both been Irish School teachers under Mr. Allen in a mountainous district of Tyrone. The story of young Michael's conversion has often been told, and nowhere with more graphic detail than by himself in a series of papers entitled, "How God led me from the Church of Rome."<sup>2</sup> Like many others, he was first led to serious inquiry by the reading of the Irish Bible. But he always traced his saving conversion to the personal teaching and influence of his revered Superintendent. Not without deep emotion have I in later years looked in the Meeting-house Green of Stewartstown, for the old tree which the young inquirer seized in his terror, after having so far dared the authority of the "One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church" as to listen to a sermon in a Protestant place of worship from the lips of a heretic parson. An experience

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<sup>1</sup> See Note D.

<sup>2</sup> These interesting chapters were written by Mr. Brannigan for *Plain Words*, and appear in the volumes for 1867 and 1868.

somewhat similar is not unusual with those who have begun to break with the fierce yet fascinating bondage of Rome. It was under Mr. Allen's paternal training that his heart was directed and his way opened up to the Gospel ministry. The raising up of a band of men able to preach the Gospel to the people in their own dearly-loved tongue had all along been Mr. Allen's ambition in the conduct of the Irish School system. Here was a young preacher after his own heart, and his own son in the faith besides. He rejoiced over him in the Lord as Paul rejoiced over Timothy.

Young Brannigan was singularly qualified for the pioneer work to which he was subsequently called. He possessed all the best characteristics of the genuine Celt. His own life and the lives of many others were brightened by his constant flow of good spirits. In the face of discouragements and difficulties which would have unnerved most men he was ever wont to look at the more cheery side of things. He abounded in humour; and his sense of the ludicrous was such that he could make his entire company, even the most phlegmatic, almost lose control of themselves as they listened to his irrepressible drollery. With all this, he was a thoroughly devoted Minister of Christ. The usual belief regarding him among the peasantry was that he had been educated for the Priesthood as well as for the Ministry of the Presbyterian Church, and they regarded with no common veneration a man who had "got the two larnins." He was not only a Protestant, but a Protestant of the most pronounced

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<sup>1</sup> *M. H.*, January, 1844, p. 95-96.

type, more free from the taint of Romanism than ever Luther was; more free, indeed, than many Protestants among ourselves who refuse to believe in the possible conversion of any "Papist." When he first went to Connaught to develop the work there, he literally took his life in his hand. Strong in his religious convictions, and fearless of danger in the service of his Divine Master, he threw himself with entire self-abandonment into the work that opened up before him. Through many laborious years, during which his health prematurely broke down, he traversed some of the loneliest roads of Connaught at all hours of the day and night, and I do not remember hearing that he was ever seriously molested. The "Branniganites" were not a favourite sect with the great bulk of the community; but their genial apostle was universally respected for his sincerity, courage, and generous human sympathy. In conducting controversy with the bolder advocates of Rome, his syllogisms were not always of the Aristotelian type; but when logic failed he could easily disable his opponent by a brilliant flash of ever available wit. Taking him all in all, we had no Missionary like him. He was a great gift of God to our Church and to her work in Connaught.

It was on the recommendation of Mr. Allen, Dr. Killen informs us, that the students selected Connaught as the sphere of Mr. Brannigan's labours. There was at the time a larger number of the Irish schools in that Province than in any other part of the country. "When I came to Connaught in January, 1846," Mr. Brannigan wrote afterwards,

“there were 112 Irish schools scattered over Mayo and Sligo; and I must say that for numbers and efficiency they far surpassed the most flourishing of the schools which came under my cognizance in the counties of Tyrone, Derry, Antrim, Fermanagh, and Donegal in Ulster.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Allen’s advice as to the location of the Students’ Missionary was, of course, guided by his knowledge of these facts; and that his advice was judicious appears from a statement afterwards made by Mr. Brannigan in his first letter from Connaught to the *Missionary Herald*: “At the call of the Students, and the request of the Directors, I came to this country on the 1st of January, 1846. . . . To get a footing in the district when I came here was not an easy matter; and *were it not for the Irish schools that prepared the way for me, the undertaking would have been hopeless.*”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *M. H.*, June, 1848, p. 557.

<sup>2</sup> *M. H.*, November, 1847, p. 496, 499.

## CHAPTER III.

### EARLY HISTORY OF THE CONNAUGHT MISSION

(*continued*).

#### THE FAMINE.

THE incidents which have been briefly recorded bring us up to the period of the Great Famine. In the latter part of July, 1846, the land—the poorer part of it especially—was suddenly smitten as by a relentless bolt from heaven. “On the 27th of last month” (July), wrote the celebrated Father Mathew, “I passed from Cork to Dublin, and the doomed plant (the potato) bloomed in all the luxuriance of an abundant harvest. Returning on the 3rd inst., I beheld with sorrow a wide waste of putrefying vegetation. In many places the wretched people were seated on the fences of their decayed gardens, wringing their hands and wailing bitterly the destruction that had left them foodless.”<sup>1</sup> A similar description applied to a large part of the country, especially in the South and West; and it added greatly to the terror of the visitation that it was declared to be “the work of a night.”

I need not multiply details—alas! too easily available—of the horrors of that period. Ireland has been a land of many sorrows, but perhaps no catastrophe so absolutely crushing had ever before overtaken her. The Famine itself was described as an earthquake or a cyclone—sudden, resistless,

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<sup>1</sup> *The Great Famine*, by W. P. O'Brien. London: Downey & Co. P. 67.

overwhelming; dealing death in its most ghastly forms on every side. But what followed was, perhaps, felt to be even worse. Pestilence waited on Famine, and Eviction upon both. The last was the hardest to bear. The heroic, uncomplaining submission of the people under the combined stroke of famine and pestilence was profoundly touching. "It was," they said, "the hand of God." They saw other hands than God's, however, in the peculiar processes of the "crowbar brigade." Evictions, and evictions on an immense scale, were absolutely unavoidable in the circumstances. But had the spirit then generally prevailed which, thank God, so largely exists to-day, eviction would certainly have been accompanied with some sort of mitigating and ameliorating provisions. With too many, however, it was enough that the ground must be "cleared," and cleared it was, over enormous areas. No testimony on this subject has impressed me more than that of the late Rev. Thomas Armstrong, and it derives the greater significance from his well-known political opinions. He lived on the confines of Mayo and Sligo through all this dreadful period; and he has left the following record of what, for some considerable time, passed under his daily observation:—"The mode of carrying out clearings was such as to leave a sting of bitterness in the heart of the evicted, which they carried to other lands, and still rankles in their breasts. I have seen crowds of peasantry, as they were about to take their seats on the long Bianconi car, *kneel down in the open street of Ballina, and invoke the direst curses on those who had forced them into*

*exile.*"<sup>1</sup> Even the distribution of charity—I refer to public charity dispensed by Government officials—had a repulsive side. Who cannot sympathize with the agony of Mr. A. M. Sullivan, M.P., when he penned these bitter words:—"I doubt if the world ever saw so huge a demoralization, so great a degradation visited upon a once high-spirited and sensitive people. All over the country large iron boilers were set up, in which what was called 'soup' was concocted; later on Indian meal stirabout was boiled. Around these boilers on the roadside there daily moaned and shrieked and fought and scuffled crowds of gaunt, cadaverous creatures that once had been men and women made in the image of God. The feeding of dogs in a kennel was far more decent and orderly. I once thought—ay, and often bitterly said, in public and in private—that never, never would our people recover the shameful humiliation of that brutal soup-boiler scheme. I frequently stood and watched the scene till tears blinded me, and I almost choked with grief and passion. It was heartbreaking, almost maddening to see, but help for it there was none."<sup>2</sup> Mr. Sullivan does not here take into account, as he was absolutely bound to do, the stupendous difficulties of the

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<sup>1</sup> *M. H.*, February, 1890, p. 46. I wish here to acknowledge the valuable suggestions I have received in the preparation of these pages from the admirable narrative entitled "My Life in Connaught," which appeared in the *M. H.* for 1889, 1890, 1891, from the pen of Mr. Armstrong. With regard to most of the topics of which he treats in his narrative, there was no abler or more trustworthy authority in the Church.

<sup>2</sup> *New Ireland*, p. 61, 62.



situation with which the administrators of public relief were suddenly confronted. But the whole shocking story, from beginning to end, raises questions that enter into the innermost texture of the Irish Religious Problem. Let it suffice for the present that I emphasize the fact to which Mr. Sullivan gives expression: "The Irish Famine of 1847 had results, social and political, that constitute it one of the most important events in Irish history for more than two hundred years. It is impossible for anyone who knew the country previous to that period, and who has thoughtfully studied it since, to avoid the conclusion that so much has been destroyed or so greatly changed, that *the Ireland of old times will be seen no more.*"<sup>1</sup> No one, I think, will attempt to challenge this testimony. It finds confirmation in almost every department, and not least in the sphere of Christian missions.

DR. JOHN EDGAR.

The "Connaught Mission," even in its somewhat rudimentary state, had already begun to awaken large interest. It was destined, however, to reach an altogether new position through the passionate advocacy of one of the greatest men ever identified with the Home Missionary operations of our Church. And here again we see the hand of God in the union of 1840. Mr. Allen and Mr. Brannigan had been connected with the Synod of Ulster; Dr. John

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<sup>1</sup> *New Ireland*, p. 67. Similarly Mr. O'Brien alleges that the Famine "brought about such a complete revolution in all the conditions of Irish life as has probably never hitherto been experienced in any other quarter of the globe."—*The Great Famine*, p. 25.

Edgar was the most distinguished representative of the Secession: all were now found earnestly working together for Ireland. Statements have frequently been made which would seem to imply that Dr. Edgar's first interest in Irish Missions dated from the period of the famine, but this does great injustice to his memory. His great influence was successfully used in making the union movement of 1840 bear directly on Home Missionary work. In 1842—the bicentenary year, commemorative of the formal organization of our Church in Carrickfergus on the 10th of June, exactly two hundred years before—the recently-formed Assembly honoured itself by electing him as its Moderator; and while in that capacity he advocated many a noble cause, he threw the whole force of his tremendous personality into the cause of Ireland. It fell to him, as Moderator, to launch the “Bicentenary Fund,” one outstanding aim of which was “the promotion of such special objects as are included in an extraordinary effort for the benefit of the Roman Catholics of Ireland.”<sup>1</sup> It was a noble conception, recognising, as it did, the cardinal truth that the Irish Presbyterian Church, now so happily united, was, by the very fact of its plantation in Ulster, divinely appointed to be a *Missionary Church in a Missionary Land*. The meeting evidently caught the inspiration of the man and the hour, so that Dr. Edgar could speak of it as “this most enthusiastic and triumphant Bicentenary Assembly.”<sup>2</sup> Some of

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<sup>1</sup> This effort was to be made almost wholly through the medium of the Irish language.

<sup>2</sup> *Select Works*, p. 604.

his glowing addresses in connection with the Fund are still preserved to us,<sup>1</sup> and the Irish Presbyterian is to be pitied in whose soul they would fail to kindle a flame of exalted Christian patriotism.<sup>2</sup>

DR. EDGAR'S FIRST CONTACT WITH THE FAMINE.

In the course of careful inquiry as to the best way of expending this special fund, Dr. Edgar made a tour to the South, in 1843. in company with Dr. Kirkpatrick of Dublin, who during a long and honoured ministry manifested an intense interest in Irish Missions, and bore a conspicuous part in their organization. This visit led to many important results, which lie outside the immediate sphere of our present inquiry. Dr. Edgar's visit to Connaught three years later (the autumn of 1846), accompanied by Mr. Allen, is more directly in the line of our narrative. Mr. Brannigan had then under his superintendence in Sligo and Mayo 144 Irish Schools. It was while engaged, at Mr. Brannigan's request, in this work of inspection<sup>3</sup> that the first indications of the approaching Famine made their dread appearance. The story of Dr. Edgar's interview with the Irish teachers in Ballina,<sup>4</sup> their piteous appeal to him for sympathy and help in the threatened distress, and his characteristically

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<sup>1</sup> *Select Works*, p. 447-453.

<sup>2</sup> The fund ultimately reached the then unprecedented sum of £14,000.—Reid's *History of the Presbyterian Church*, iii. 485.

<sup>3</sup> The Doctor was delighted with the accurate Scriptural knowledge of the scholars, and was emphatic in his testimony that "there was not a blockhead among them."

<sup>4</sup> 11th September.

homely method of testing the reality and extent of the calamity, which was already filling all hearts with terror, has often been told.<sup>1</sup>

The sudden and close contact with the mysterious visitation into which he was thus providentially thrown greatly affected Dr. Edgar, and may be said to have coloured his whole subsequent career. It undoubtedly had a determining influence on the subsequent history of our entire Irish work. It was on the following morning (which happened to be the Sabbath), before going out to preach in Mullafary (Killala) Church, that, seated in the humble parlour of the Cottage Hill Manse,<sup>2</sup> he hastily wrote his first thrilling appeal for Connaught.<sup>3</sup> It was in the form of a Letter to the *Banner of Ulster*, and was dated "Mullafary, Killala Bay, September 13th, 1846." In this letter there are noble passages, which show that the soul of the great philanthropist was stirred to its very depths by the terrible scenes through which he had been passing. His call was, in the first instance, for temporal help. "Let the man," he said, "who wishes to know the real blessing of giving, carry his liberality to Connaught. Let him who would become acquainted with the bliss which expressions of heartfelt gratitude bestow, confer favours on the people who breathe the pure air that blows down

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<sup>1</sup> *Memoir of Dr. Edgar*, p. 204.

<sup>2</sup> Though the residence of the Minister, it was not strictly a manse till some years afterwards.

<sup>3</sup> This appeal is often spoken of as if it were the still more famous *Cry from Connaught*. This is an error.

from the mountain range of Nephin. . . Relief must come at once, or they will be all dead ; relief must come for the whole mass, for hunger breaks through stone walls ; and let us not delay till wise men are driven mad."

It was the first ringing blast of a trumpet which was soon to rouse the members of the Irish Presbyterian Church to a wholly new interest in their country.

## CHAPTER IV.

### EARLY HISTORY OF THE CONNAUGHT MISSION.

(continued).

#### THE "CRY FROM CONNAUGHT."

OUR Church historians have happily placed within easy reach of our people the story of Dr. Edgar's extraordinary and, one might almost say, super-human efforts on behalf of Connaught.<sup>1</sup>

*A Cry from Connaught: Appeal for a Land that fainteth by reason of a Famine of Bread, and of hearing the Words of the Lord* (Gen. xlvii. 13, Amos viii. 11), though but a pamphlet of a few pages, made a profound impression on the public mind.<sup>2</sup> It did not originate the "Connaught Mission," although this representation has been inadvertently made by various writers, but it raised it to a platform of publicity and popularity such as it had never previously occupied, and it greatly contributed to its expansion, consolidation, and permanence. It, indeed, largely helped to create the very expression "Connaught Mission." The *Cry* was written a very few weeks after the letter from Mullafary already referred to. The horror of the situation was intensifying every hour, and the urgency was supreme. The whole soul of the great Christian patriot was

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. Killen especially has laid us under the deepest obligations in this matter. His *Memoir of Dr. Edgar* is full of most interesting and accurate detail.

<sup>2</sup> It first appeared as an article in the *M. H.*, November, 1846.

poured into this memorable appeal. I should like to reproduce some of its glowing sentences, but I must be satisfied with one which is doubtless familiar to many readers of these pages—it has often been quoted :—"God of our fathers (I might have cried amidst old Presbyterian graves), hast Thou none in Presbyterian Ireland, or in the Free Church of Scotland, to take up the mantle of the faithful minister who, in days of primitive zeal, carried around this district—so desolate now—the consolations of the Gospel of God. Is there no one to bind to his belt the copy of the Irish Bible, still preserved, which this old patriarch carried, as from house to house he told the tale, oft repeated, yet ever new, that there is only one safe way into eternity, one rod and staff of comfort in death, one companion of the way, who can give the charm of society to death, and light up the darkness of the grave, and that companion is Jesus."<sup>1</sup> As is well known, Dr. Merle D'Aubigné, the eloquent historian of the Reformation, when delivering an address in Belfast at the opening of the Assembly's College in 1853, as he held up the little pamphlet before the brilliant audience he was addressing, declared that he would rather be the author of the *Cry from Connaught* than of all the volumes he had ever written.<sup>2</sup> Our own Professor Croskery—no mean judge—has said that the *Cry from Connaught* and *Famie, a True Story*, were two of the most powerful and touching things in Christian literature.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Select Works*, p. 491.

<sup>2</sup> *Select Works*, p. 481.

<sup>3</sup> *Irish Worthies*, p. 60.

## BELFAST LADIES' RELIEF ASSOCIATION.

Dr. Edgar's first appeal, as we have seen, was for temporal relief. This was the original object of the "Belfast Ladies' Relief Association," of which he was President. It was founded soon after the publication of his Mullafary letter, and by the end of the year it had expended between £4,000 and £5,000 in the alleviation of distress.<sup>1</sup> He and his Ladies' Committee, however, soon found it necessary to lift the work to a higher level. Accordingly, in the early part of the year 1847, a scheme was adopted for the extension and permanent operation of the "Belfast Ladies' Relief Association for Connaught." This included the establishment of Industrial Schools, and instruction of the pupils in simple Bible truth, "without a catechism of any kind." These industrial Scriptural Schools achieved a most distinguished success, and for many years attracted a world-wide interest. Each school was put under the "superintendence of one or more resident ladies of active benevolence and piety." Excellent school accommodation, local prestige, along with careful and continuous Christian oversight, were thus secured for them. The teachers were, for the most part, young women of religious character from the Counties of Down and Antrim—Down especially—qualified to give instruction in sewed-muslin work. The whole industrial arrangements were conducted on strict business lines. The Association trained the girls; the manufacturers supplied work and wages.

<sup>1</sup> The "Belfast Relief Fund" was organized at the same time, under Dr. Edgar's inspiration, by Belfast merchants. It spent £16,000 on temporal relief.



In one of his later papers—*Connaught Harvest*—Dr. Edgar states that the girls were then earning £20,000 a year. This of itself necessarily involved vast social reformation; and a library might be filled with the records of spiritual results which followed the simple, affectionate Bible teaching given in these splendid institutions.<sup>1</sup>

#### TWO GROUPS OF SCHOOLS.

From the beginning of the year 1847 two groups of Scriptural and Industrial Schools existed together within the area occupied by the Connaught Mission.<sup>2</sup> They were known locally as “Brannigan’s Schools” and “Edgar’s Schools.” The latter did not, strictly speaking, constitute any part of the Assembly’s mission. No one was more careful to emphasize this than Dr. Edgar himself. The Ladies’ Association in Belfast was composed of Christian women belonging to different Denominations. Dr. Edgar claimed that it was “a female Evangelical Alliance”—“a happy union of Christians of many creeds.” “The Association,” he says, “keep their schools distinct from others, as well as from Churches and Missions in the West, desirous to be auxiliary to all true Churches.”<sup>3</sup> The Pres-

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<sup>1</sup> For full information see *Memoir of Dr. Edgar* and *Edgar’s Select Works*.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Brannigan’s were, strictly speaking, first in the field. Dr. Killen tells us (*Memoir*, pp. 235, 236) that it was an unsuccessful attempt on the part of Mr. Brannigan to introduce the sewed-muslin industry into his own (English) Schools that suggested the idea of Industrial Schools to Dr. Edgar.

<sup>3</sup> *Select Works*, pp. 512, 513, 564, etc.

byterian Missionaries were accorded an important and honourable place in the instruction of the pupils; but this was simply owing to the circumstance that the parochial clergy, as a rule, held themselves aloof from the entire movement. The schools were conducted on strictly "non-sectarian" lines, and were not, directly or indirectly, under the supervision of any Church.

It was different in the case of Mr. Brannigan's schools. Though entirely supported by private contributions, they were from the outset placed in connection with the Assembly's Mission. They may be said to have originated in the adventurous enthusiasm of Mr. Brannigan himself. The Irish-speaking schools, which for many years had formed one of the principal agencies of the Irish Mission, were virtually shattered by the famine. The whole trend of the new circumstances was in favour of the more general use of English, as it was only in that direction that the people could hope for any escape from the ruin that had overtaken them. The National School system had been introduced some fifteen years before; but in many districts the Roman Catholic clergy had as yet taken but little advantage of its provisions. The youth of the country were growing up in helpless ignorance. A large proportion of them could speak both English and Irish. Mr. Brannigan boldly seized the occasion, and—in the first instance on his own personal responsibility—started throughout the wide district of which he had the oversight what he describes as "the higher and better agency of

*English Schools.*"<sup>1</sup> Teachers were available among the adherents of the Mission; and humble but adequate accommodation could be had for a trifling sum in the teacher's residence or in some neighbouring cottage. The whole outlay did not at first exceed £10 a year; but £10 a year was at that time a prodigious income even for a fairly educated Connaught peasant. It is of great interest now to recall the fact that it was two Dublin ladies, members of our own Church, who were the first to encourage the intrepid Connaught Missionary in this new departure. Mr. Brannigan writes in June, 1848: "Their (the English Schools') origin may be traced to the united exertions of Mrs. (John Hamilton) Reid and the late Mrs. (Dr.) Peebles, Dublin."<sup>2</sup> Additional help came, especially from Scotland; and the humble School system with which the name of Michael Brannigan will be ever associated, and which for many subsequent years was the most outstanding feature of the Assembly's Mission in Connaught, came to be organized.<sup>3</sup>

These two classes of schools worked together in

<sup>1</sup> "These English Schools," he writes, "have been reared on the ruins of the Irish schools."—*M. H.*, June, 1848, p. 558.

<sup>2</sup> *M. H.*, 1848, p. 558. Referring to the same circumstance, the Rev. Robert Allen says: "Early in 1847 two Christian ladies assisted him (Mr. Brannigan) to establish some Scriptural and Industrial Schools for young females, and thence a new era has sprung up in the Mission's history."—*M. H.*, October, 1849, p. 728.

<sup>3</sup> Dr. Edgar's Schools were discontinued about 1858, owing to extensive failures in the muslin trade and other causes. Mr. Brannigan's, under the superintendence of Mr. Allen, and subsequently of the Rev. Thomas Armstrong, have been maintained with greater or less efficiency till very recently.

the utmost harmony, and were mutually helpful. The honoured name of Dr. Edgar was a tower of strength to both—as President in the one case, and Convener in the other. His annual visits in this double capacity were an inspiration to Missionaries, Lady Superintendents, and Teachers alike; and it is not strange that the “Apostle of Connaught,” as he came to be affectionately designated, was everywhere regarded as the very embodiment of the entire Mission.

#### CALL FOR ADDITIONAL LABOURERS.

Meanwhile Mr. Brannigan was opening up new preaching stations in Mayo and North Sligo, and he urgently called for additional ministerial help. His health had broken down under the excessive strain of his labours. In response to his entreaties, the Board of Missions sent deputies to Connaught to make careful inquiry into all the circumstances. There still remain a few—now very few—among us who read with peculiarly tender interest the reports of these deputies and other visitors, which were published at the time in the *Missionary Herald*.<sup>1</sup> They unanimously recommended an immediate increase of the Missionary staff. One of the visitors was the Rev. (afterwards Dr.) William Johnston, of Belfast. After making a survey of the field, he wrote to the members of the Students' Missionary Association, congratulating them heartily on the good work they had done in sending out such a

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<sup>1</sup> Letters appear from Edward M. Dill, W. B. Kirkpatrick David Adair (Westport), William Crotty, James White (Carrickfergus), William Johnston (Townsend Street), and others.

Missionary as Mr. Brannigan, and urging them to still larger effort. His letter is characterized by all the impetuous fervour which afterwards made him, under the influence of the Divine Spirit, such a conspicuous Christian force in the community. "There is a work at present progressing there," he says, "of which the half has not been told, of which more is known in Scotland than in Ulster, and for which, though I blush to write it, more is done by the friends of truth abroad than by our lukewarm and unbelieving Presbyterians<sup>1</sup> at home. What you have done," he continues, "you have done well, but vastly more yet remains to be done both by you and the Church. So far from being satisfied, the Missionary work is yet but in its infancy. Oh, feed it into maturity; pray it into manhood; multiply your Missionaries; enlarge your agencies; extend the truth; unfold the banner of the Cross; and see whether God will not give you a blessing, the expansive power of which Connaught will not contain, Ireland will not exhaust, nor time terminate."<sup>2</sup>

THE APPOINTMENT OF REV. ROBERT ALLEN.

A step of immense importance was taken by the

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. White (Carrickfergus) also makes the extraordinary statement that the "ladies of Ulster do not support a single school in connection with our Mission."—*M. H.*, May, 1848, p. 554. The Rev. William Johnston bears similar testimony. Pp. 563, 560. The explanation of this strange state of matters lies in the fact that the Ulster ladies were naturally enough preoccupied with Dr. Edgar's great industrial enterprise. All along they have been the best friends of our Church's work in Connaught and everywhere else.

<sup>2</sup> *M. H.*, June, 1848, p. 560.

General Assembly in 1848, in the designation of the Rev. Robert Allen, of Stewartstown, as "Superintendent of the Mission in Connaught."<sup>1</sup> No man in the entire Church could have been found more singularly adapted for this important position. His experience in Irish Mission work was, as we have seen, altogether unique. He was full of the kindest sympathy with the Irish people, whose grievances he thoroughly understood, and whose many good qualities he heartily appreciated. In those days comparatively few thought it worth while to make the doctrinal side of Romanism a subject of serious inquiry. To the average Protestant it was but a senseless superstition, fit only to excite derision. Mr. Allen belonged to a different school. For years and years he had brought the full energy of a singularly acute mind to the study of this great subject. Holding the most pronounced views as to the evils and perils of the system, and its deteriorating influence on the social, moral, and spiritual condition of the populations whom it controlled, he nevertheless knew the secret of dealing faithfully and without offence with individual Roman Catholics on the supreme concerns of personal salvation. Among the young Missionaries he was like a father in the midst of his children. His rare sagacity and prudence made him an

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<sup>1</sup> The first practical action in the direction of this appointment was made by the "Edinburgh Ladies' Association," who generously offered to become responsible for a large part of Mr. Allen's salary in the event of the proposed change being carried out. Eighteen months previously, in the *Cry from Connaught*, Dr. Edgar had eloquently urged the same arrangement.

invaluable counsellor, to whom all looked up with affectionate and reverent confidence. It is not strange, therefore, that from the time of his removal to Connaught, in the summer of 1848, the work rapidly grew in compactness, extent, and efficiency.

THE REV. DR. BELLIS.

I have been obliged in the preceding outline to pass over, in most cases without mention, the names of some prominent men who, each in his own particular sphere, opened up the way for the establishment of the Connaught Mission. The Revs. Dr. Norman M'Leod (of Campsie), Joseph Fisher (of Galway), Dr. W. B. Kirkpatrick, Henry M'Manus, William Crotty, John Edmonds, Dr. Edward M. Dill, Mr. D. K. Clarke,<sup>1</sup> and others rendered most important, some of them most splendid, service. I find it impossible, however, to enter into any details regarding the help they gave. But one name I cannot pass over without a brief notice: I refer to that of the Rev. Dr. George Bellis, of Belfast. From the very outset of his ministry he evinced a warm interest in Ireland. At the time of the union in 1840, he helped, with Dr. Edgar, to give the proceedings a pronounced bent in the direction of Irish Mission work. It was his Missionary patriotism, if I may so speak, that chiefly led to his appointment as Missionary Secretary of the Synod of Ulster, and afterwards of the General Assembly; and anyone who will consult the early numbers of the *Missionary Herald* will be able to understand how great was the influence which he wielded as editor

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<sup>1</sup>See Note E.

of that unpretentious little serial. With its four pages of badly-printed matter, and its tentative issue, January, 1843, of 1,500 copies, it certainly did not seem destined to inaugurate a Missionary revolution in the Church.<sup>1</sup> But it *did* inaugurate such a revolution. I remember very well the depreciatory terms in which many spoke of the *Herald* while it was struggling with the initial difficulties of its position ; but anyone who to-day, in the light of the intervening years, takes even a cursory glance at its early numbers, will adopt a very different view. Of one thing I am persuaded—that what we call the “Connaught Mission” could not have been sustained, perhaps hardly even organized, had it not been for the aid rendered by the *Missionary Herald* ; and our Church will ever be under the burden of a great obligation for the valuable services rendered in this connection by the Rev. Dr. George Bellis.

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<sup>1</sup> In January, 1844, the circulation had risen to 9,000 ; in January, 1845, to 12,000 ; and in January, 1847, to 16,000 copies monthly. *M. H.* i., pp. 89, 189, 406.



## CHAPTER V.

### CONNAUGHT EXPERIENCES—FIRST IMPRESSIONS.

#### ARRIVAL IN CONNAUGHT.

I LEFT Belfast for Connaught on the 17th July, 1848. At that time the railway reached no further than Armagh, and the journey from that city was performed by coach or long car. My comrades, Thomas Young Killen and Matthew Kerr, had preceded me by a few weeks, as I had not sufficiently recovered strength after my severe illness.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Killen had returned to Camlin, near Boyle, County Roscommon, the station he had occupied for some months during the previous summer, and where Mrs. Irwin<sup>2</sup> was patroness of Dr. Edgar's Industrial Schools in that district. Mr. Kerr had settled in Dromore West, County Sligo, a station which had been opened by Mr. Brannigan the year before. On the second day after leaving Belfast I stepped down off the long car opposite a mud cabin which stood at the edge of the Dromore West bog, a few yards from the main road to Ballina. A small room not many feet square, interjected between the kitchen and the barn, was to be the residence of the Missionary. In comparison with what either Matthew Kerr or I had expected, it appeared a palatial apartment. It was afterwards known to some of us as a very Bethel. The barn supplied the place of a "meeting-house," or cathedral if you will. For some years it was the scene and centre of

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<sup>1</sup> See Chap I.

<sup>2</sup> Afterwards Mrs. John Hall.

the labours of one of the most devoted and, in many respects, most successful Missionaries our Church has ever had in her service. During my short stay with my dear friend Kerr, the public conveyance—it was on this occasion a coach—stopped one day opposite Tom Morrow's cabin to let down a passenger. The horses, not understanding a proceeding so unusual at this particular spot, suddenly wheeled down towards the bridle road leading to the cottage, nearly precipitating the coach and all its belongings into the bog. A distinguished-looking clergyman suddenly made his appearance on the high road, and we at once recognized the portly form of the Rev. Dr. John Brown, of Aghadoey. He had come as one of a Commission appointed by the General Assembly to inspect the work in Connaught, and especially the English Schools under the care of Mr. Brännigan.<sup>1</sup> I do not know that we ever heard the substance of his individual report, but we ascertained, at any rate, that he expressed himself greatly exercised that the Church should have sent two such boys as Matthew Kerr and myself to take any responsible part in the initiation of so important an enterprise. We certainly entertained this view ourselves, perhaps even more pronouncedly than the venerable doctor.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The other members of the Commission were the Rev. William McClure, of Derry, and the Rev. Robert Allen, of Stewartstown.—*Assembly's Minutes*, 1848, p. 684.

<sup>2</sup> A short time afterwards, when Mr. Kerr and I were on our first deputation visit to Scotland, John Smith, a well-known Scripture reader then connected with the Mission, prayed at family worship in the little cottage that "God would be with the two *gossoons* who had gone to Scotland, and give them something to say."

## VISIT TO AN INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL.

There was at the time a fine school in Dromore West, connected with the "Belfast Ladies' Association for Connaught." The teacher was a young woman from the County Down, who instructed the girls in sewed-muslin work. I have already stated that a Bible lesson was part of the daily programme in all Dr. Edgar's schools. On the day after my arrival in the village, Matthew Kerr took me on a visit to this school. *It was my first introduction to Mission work in Connaught.* I had just come, a wholly inexperienced neophyte, from the heart of Ulster Protestantism to the heart of Connaught Roman Catholicism. I had but very occasionally spoken to a Roman Catholic, and certainly never on the subject of personal religion. I fear I had largely accepted the creed of the environment in which I had been brought up—that Irish Roman Catholics were almost wholly inaccessible to any true Gospel influence, and that, indeed, they were unconquerably hostile to it. And yet I saw here a class of forty or fifty tidy, bright, intelligent girls—most of them unmistakably Celtic—eagerly studying the Scripture lesson for the day, and showing by their answering a full and apparently appreciative acquaintance with the great outlines of Divine truth. During the time they had been at the school they had learned to sing some simple Gospel hymns, neither the words nor the music of which, in most instances, as far as I was capable of judging, reached a high critical standard; but when, after the Scripture lesson, they proceeded to sing

with genuine Celtic pathos a Children's Hymn beginning—

I'm glad I ever saw the day,  
Sing glory, glory, glory ;  
When first we met to sing and pray—  
Sing glory, glory, glory,—

I must say that I was deeply moved. I had not expected to witness at the outset such a manifest proof of the susceptibility of the Irish heart to the simple Gospel story. The Divine catholicity of the Gospel had never before seemed to me more real or sublime ; and it is not without devout gratitude to God, I can now testify that the lessons and impressions of that first half-hour in a Connaught school I was enabled to carry with me into my entire subsequent work as a Missionary to my countrymen.

#### MULLAFARY.

As far as I can remember, it was only in the course of my journey Westward that I definitely learned what district had been assigned to me. I believe it was Matthew Kerr who informed me that I was to go to Mullafary,<sup>1</sup> near Killala ; Mr. Rodgers, the senior Minister of the congregation, having just retired from active service. Mr. Kerr offered to accompany me. We passed through Ballina on our way. The Rev. Robert Allen, who afterwards made

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<sup>1</sup> In the *M. H.* for April, 1848, a letter appears from the Rev. James White, of Carrickfergus, indicating three districts—1, Parkmore (Ballinglen) ; 2, Dromore West ; 3, Mullafary—each of which required the services of a Missionary. The letter was evidently written under the inspiration of Mr. Brannigan. Mr. Brannigan had himself taken charge of Ballinglen, and Mr. Kerr of Dromore West ; Mullafary, accordingly, fell to my lot.





MULLAFARY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

Ballina his headquarters in Connaught, had not yet arrived from Stewartstown. But we had the advantage of an interview with the Rev. Thomas Armstrong, who had settled there in the year 1845, and was now most hopefully engaged in building up a vigorous congregation in this central station of the Mission. In the afternoon we reached Cottage Hill, Mullafary, the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Rodgers. Mr. Rodgers was a very able and scholarly Minister, who for many years may be said to have occupied the position of an Irish chief in that part of Connaught. Those who are familiar with Dr. Edgar's pamphlet, *The Cry Heard*, will remember that he makes very special mention of Mrs. Rodgers, and of the distinguished services she had rendered during the Famine. He dwells with peculiar interest on the circumstance that a short time before his death, Dr. Chalmers had written him asking for further information regarding the district "over which Mrs. Rodgers expiates," and "within whose limits there had been no death by starvation."

The old congregation of Killala, or Mullafary, was constituted a joint charge with Sligo (some 40 miles off) in the year 1695, and finally erected into a separate congregation in 1698. It was, therefore, born in troublous times, and may be said, in this sense, to have been a child of the Revolution. It is said to have consisted originally of a colony of weavers who were brought from the North—the local belief was, from Donegal—by a former Earl of Arran. He was apparently encouraged to attempt this miniature colonization in the West by the

success that had attended the greater colonization of Ulster. The first place of worship being situated near the River Moy,<sup>1</sup> two or three miles distant from Mullafary, it bore the name of Moywater, and until its erection into a separate congregation was visited from time to time by the Minister of Sligo. The sturdy little flock was exposed to great loss and outrage at the time of the Rebellion in 1798,<sup>2</sup> the French army under General Humbert having, during the lifetime of the Rev. Alexander Marshall, the predecessor of Mr. Rodgers, landed at Kilmummin, not far from the Hill of Mullafary.<sup>3</sup> It is marvellous how this little colony of Presbyterians, occupying the isolated position they did in an almost exclusively Roman Catholic district, had for upwards of a century and a half held firmly by the doctrines and forms of the Church of their fathers. I had an illustration of this on the day of my ordination a year afterwards.<sup>4</sup> On that occasion we were favoured with the presence of the Rev. J. W. (afterwards Dr.) Taylor, Free Church Minister of Flisk, Fifeshire. Our Church Psalmody was conducted by John Duncan, one of the elders, and it is no disparagement of the musical services of the saintly old man to suggest that his singing was of a somewhat primitive type. Indeed, it was its very

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<sup>1</sup> The Rev. Thomas Armstrong says that the original building was probably erected on an island in the Moy.—*M. H.* 1890, p. 257.

<sup>2</sup> See Note P.

<sup>3</sup> One of the Mission schools in my district was situated on the very ledge of rock on which the French army landed.

<sup>4</sup> Mr. Kerr and I were ordained together in Mullafary on 8th August, 1849.



primitiveness that won the enthusiastic admiration of our good friend from Scotland. He affirmed that it was an exact reproduction of the plaintive melodies whose weird cadences had so often resounded through the mountains and glens of Scotland in the old days of the Covenant. I must say that with all its musical defects, I have never since heard a more devotional rendering of the Psalmody of our Church.

THE WOOD OF FOCLUT.

The entire region in which Mullafary is situated possesses a quite exceptional interest in connection with the labours of St. Patrick,<sup>1</sup> and I doubt not that the very circumstance of my early location in the neighbourhood was a factor in determining my future relation to the Irish Mission. All who are familiar with the leading outlines of St. Patrick's life (as I trust most of our intelligent young people now are) know that in his *Confession* Patrick states that he came on his great Mission to Ireland in obedience to a call which he believed he had received in a night vision whilst with his parents "in the Britains." In this vision a man named Victorius appeared to come to him from Ireland (Hiberio) with a letter containing "THE VOICE OF THE IRISH," earnestly urging him to come to Ireland to preach the Gospel. The Voice, he says, came from near "the Wood of Foclut,"<sup>2</sup> which is near the Western Sea." Careful investigation has made it almost as certain as anything in Patrick's biography that the Wood of

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<sup>1</sup> See Note G.

See Note H.

Foclut was in the immediate vicinity of Mullafary, not more than a gunshot from the Manse. The picturesque cone of Croagh Patrick (originally Croagh Aigle, "Hill of the Eagle,"), near Westport, is visible from Mullafary Hill. The story about Croagh Patrick and the driving of the "varmint" into the sea (Clew Bay) is of comparatively late date, and may be a legendary record of the great Missionary's notable success in this part of the country. Patrick seems to have prepared himself for his campaign in Tyrawley by a season of prayer on this now famous mountain. In this respect it ranks with Slemish, Co. Antrim, where, amid his herd of cattle, he first struggled into the Kingdom of God. His preaching made conspicuous way in and around Foclut, and a "great church" was erected at the place.

Mullafary Hill commands on every side a noble view. It was on the evening of this, our first, visit that Mr. Kerr and I, pacing the garden at the back of the Manse, as we looked westward towards the sombre, storm-swept mountains of Erris, sang together in the enthusiasm of our early missionary zeal:—

" O'er the gloomy hills of darkness  
Look, ye saints ; be still and gaze ;  
All the promises do travail  
With a glorious day of grace ;  
Blessed Jubilee,  
Let thy glorious morning dawn !"

We had as yet but little idea either of the difficulties or the compensations of the work we had undertaken.

## CHAPTER VI.

### CONNAUGHT EXPERIENCES (*continued*).

#### FIRST IMPRESSIONS.

#### TRACES OF THE FAMINE.

THE Missionary district of Mullafary, like the Dromore West district, had been opened by Mr. Brannigan. When I entered on it I found seven Mission Schools in operation, some of them of a most hopeful and interesting character. They were scattered over a pretty wide area, and the great majority of the pupils were Roman Catholics. All the schools under my care were known as "Brannigan's Schools," "Edgar's Schools" being situated in chiefly more southerly parts of Connaught. In all the districts the Missionary's chief access to the people was through these schools.

Traces of the Famine were still to be seen everywhere. The country was thickly dotted over with blackened gables of roofless cabins; and in many instances populous villages had disappeared, leaving only crumbling mud walls to attest how thorough was the desolation which had overtaken them. It seemed as if some mighty deluge had swept over the land. Even at that comparatively late period, one was constantly meeting in the fields, on the roadways, and, indeed, everywhere, pallid, gaunt forms of men, women, and children, who seemed to have been almost de-humanized. Owing to constant hunger they had a sickly, earthy smell; and not infrequently the skin was falling in scales from their emaciated

bodies. At the first outbreak of famine, private Christian benevolence accomplished much. The efforts of Dr. Edgar and the Associations he inaugurated, of the Society of Friends, of the British Association, and other charitable organizations, were beyond all praise. From 1848, however, the main responsibility for administering relief devolved upon the Poor Law Commissioners.<sup>1</sup> The Mission Schools were attended, for the most part, by the poorer class of children, though for a considerable time they numbered among their pupils not a few who belonged to what were regarded as socially respectable and well-to-do families. Some of these did not accept the relief which was provided daily for the more needy scholars. As relief of some kind was dispensed in all the common schools of the country by priests and parsons alike, it attracted no very special notice in the case of our pupils.

Some of the schools in the Mullafary district were situated at a distance of eight or more miles from the Manse; but they were all visited at least fortnightly, most of them weekly. They were, besides, nearly all used as regular preaching stations. The same general arrangements were carried out in all the other districts.

#### SCOTTISH MISSIONARIES.

I intend to refer on another page to the invaluable help we got from Scotland in these early days of the Connaught Mission, as well as at other times. I cannot, however, but make a passing reference to important *personal* help (if I may so express it) which

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<sup>1</sup> *The Great Famine.* By W. P. O'Brien, C.B. Chap. xi.

the Christian sympathy of Scotland provided for us in the Mullafary district. Mr. (afterwards Rev.) Malcolm MacGregor had joined the Mission before me, and was resident in Mullafary on my arrival there.<sup>1</sup> He was sent to Connaught by the Free Synod of Aberdeen, the interest of the Synod having been thoroughly awakened by the earnest appeal of an Irish deputy, the Rev. Joseph Barclay, of Carnmoney. Mr. Barclay had himself paid a visit to the Connaught Mission field in the summer of 1847; and as I was present when he addressed the Students' Missionary Association in Belfast in the course of the following winter, I can testify that he was full of enthusiasm regarding the work. Mr. MacGregor was one of the saintliest men it has ever been my privilege to know. He had been an intimate friend of Wm. Chalmers Burns, afterwards of Newchwang, China, and was a man of the same lofty religious type. Owen's *Christologia, or a Declaration of the Glorious Mystery of the Person of Christ, God and Man*, was his favourite theological treatise. It was he who first led me to study this immortal work; and I feel prompted to say, for the sake especially of younger brethren in the Ministry who may read these pages, that, notwithstanding its prolixity, dogmatism, and now belated criticism, it gave me a deeper view of the "mystery" of which it treats, and of the relations thereto of the entire system of Divine truth than any book I ever read, outside the Bible. It helped to fix the conviction immovably in my mind that Scriptural theology is an essentially experimental science. There must be

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<sup>1</sup> He subsequently removed to the adjacent station of Fortfield.

an objective revelation of the truth ; there must be a subjective revelation as well ; and both are supernatural. Mr. MacGregor's very character, as an undoubted and universally recognized man of God, made an extraordinary impression upon the community. I have reason to know that after the lapse of many long years his memory was still held sacred in the neighbourhood by Roman Catholics quite as much as by Protestants. His case has often helped me to understand how it was that such touching and beautiful legends gathered round the names of many of our ancient Celtic Missionaries. Mr. MacGregor could thoroughly appreciate Irish wit, but his attempts at producing the genuine article were, as a rule, somewhat awkward. When the Synod of Aberdeen, after he had spent twelve months in Ireland, proposed to ordain him on what he felt to be a most inadequate salary, good man and all as he was, he did not hesitate to say that, while he was quite ready to work for his Master for the sum they mentioned, and for nothing at all, he objected to work for the Synod of Aberdeen on the same terms. I forget how the matter was adjusted, but he continued to labour in Connaught for some time longer.

I had another Scottish coadjutor in my district in the person of Robert Johnston, a catechist from the congregation of the Rev. (afterwards Dr.) Moody Stuart, of Free St. Luke's, Edinburgh. Mr. Stuart had himself visited Ireland in 1847, and on his return home the members of his congregation at once undertook to provide and support a catechist in the district of Mullafary. The offer was, of course,

gratefully accepted by our Mission Directors, and Robert Johnston was already in the field when I entered upon it. He was a man of the same pronounced religious character as Mr. MacGregor, though belonging to a somewhat different school. His presence in the district was felt by everyone to be a loving evangel. He died of fever shortly before my removal to Dublin.<sup>1</sup>

#### BALLYMACIOLA—PRIESTLY METHODS.

Between eight and nine months previous to my arrival in Connaught an incident, which at the time attracted much public attention, occurred at a place called Ballymaciola, about two miles distant from Mullafary. Mr. Brannigan had started a school and preaching-station in that part of the parish. The cabin in which the school was held was situated in a bog (any other location than *in* a bog or *near* one was somewhat of an exception in Connaught), and was the residence of one of Mr. Brannigan's emergency teachers, as they might not inaptly have been called. On the afternoon of Sabbath, the 31st October, 1847, Dr. Edward M. Dill, the devoted and eloquent agent of the Assembly's Home Mission, then on a missionary tour through Connaught, went after Divine service in Mullafary Church, accompanied by Mr. Rodgers and his family, to conduct a short meeting in the schoolhouse.<sup>2</sup> "They had scarce arrived five minutes when the cry was heard, 'There's the priest!' and a scene instantly followed

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<sup>1</sup> See Note H.

<sup>2</sup> I quote from a letter in the *M. H.*, December, 1847, apparently from the pen of the Rev. David Rodgers.

which utterly baffles description. The children rushed from the schoolhouse in a body, screaming with terror, and tumbling over each other in dozens. Numbers of men and women were seen scrambling over the ditches and taking to the fields at full speed; and those who had not time to get away were seen flying through the teacher's back yard, in wild confusion, their faces the very picture of terror and dismay. In an instant the priest galloped furiously into the yard, plunging through the crowd, and laying about him with the horse-whip in every direction." He "galloped his horse against Dr. Dill at full speed, knocked him down, and rode over him, cutting at him with his whip when lying on the ground." Later on, in reply to a challenge from Dr. Dill that he should lay down his whip and defend his religion with argument, he exclaimed, "You d—— imposture, I'll drive my whip down your throat; I despise your arguments!" Some eighty persons remained, notwithstanding the priest's violent action, and a short service was peaceably concluded. Dr. Dill and his friends, who had a narrow escape, returned to the Manse between nine and ten o'clock at night, under the protection of the Killala police. It was in some such way that the Roman clergy in Ireland were accustomed for generations to prove that they were the true and only ministers of Jesus Christ.

Dr. Dill was urged, in the interests of religious liberty, to cite the priest, the Rev. Thomas Timlin, before the civil tribunals. A trial was accordingly held in Ballina. The presiding Judge—a Roman Catholic—directed a verdict against the priest; but



the Roman Catholic jury, in the face of all evidence, acquitted him.<sup>1</sup> The victory, however, was felt to be a very perilous one to the victors, and the whole incident helped to bring to an end in that part of the country the odious and degrading tyranny of the priest's whip.<sup>2</sup> The Press carried the story everywhere. The eyes of the civilized world were on Ireland, and perhaps especially on Connaught, as never before; and the people themselves were beginning to realize that they were entitled to at least some of the rights of thinking beings.

This latter statement may find illustration in what happened in my own case at this identical spot. I was not long settled in Mullafary when I arranged to conduct a short service at one of my school stations I was accompanied on my journey by the teacher, who had been a Roman Catholic. Our road led through the bog of Ballymaciola. As we walked along we came upon the parish priest—Father Tom Timlin—the same priest who had but a short time before attacked Dr. Dill in the way already described.

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. Armstrong mentions (*Life in Connaught, M. H.*, July 1890) that he had been assured even from the first by Mr. Timlin's own lawyers that no jury in that locality would, under any circumstances, convict a priest. Dr. Edgar published a pamphlet at the time, entitled *Connaught Priests and Connaught Juries*, which gave a full account of the whole transaction. This pamphlet had an immense circulation.

<sup>2</sup> Even after this the parish priest of Ballina, who subsequently became a bishop, was accustomed in the public streets of the town to use a large whip on young offenders of his own flock. I do not think he ventured to assail Protestants. He vindicated the practice in the local newspaper, citing our Lord's having used a whip of small cords in order to drive the money-changers out of the Temple.

He was on horseback, and was superintending several able-bodied men who, with horses and carts, were diligently collecting his "dues" from the hungry harvest field in the form of "stooks" of oats, the unfortunate parishioners being assessed for this purpose according to the place they occupied in the clerical scale of graduated respectability.<sup>1</sup> As my companion and I were passing quietly by, the priest called out to him, "Take care of that man" (referring to me), "he wants simply to fleece you." "That remark," I plucked up courage to say, "comes with a very bad grace from you, Mr. Timlin, considering how you are employed at the present moment." "What Church do you belong to?" he said, pointing to the hill of Mullafary some distance off, where—fortunately or unfortunately—there were visible at the time an Episcopal Church, a Presbyterian Church, a Methodist Church, and, if I mistake not, a Baptist Church. "If I was leaving the Catholic Church," he continued, "I would not know which of you to join." "You would make no great mistake," I said, "if you were to join any of us. We all preach the Gospel of a free salvation through Jesus Christ alone." In the course of further conversation he manifested an almost incredible ignorance of the Bible; and I saw that he was in actual terror of a little book I carried in my hand, which he evidently took to be a Bible, but which was in reality a small volume of Christian hymns. I quoted a few passages of Scripture in reply to some points he had endeavoured to make, when he at once broke out

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<sup>1</sup> I am told that this exaction of the priest's "bart," as it was called, has been generally discontinued in later years.

into the grossest personal abuse. I said that I did not pretend to equal him in the use of scurrilous language, but that it was very plain to his parishioners who were present that I knew the Bible better than he did. This drew from him an exclamation of a very unclerical kind, which it is not necessary to repeat in full. "——!" he said, "can I not go along the Queen's highway without being attacked in this manner?" I appealed to his attendants and their love of fair play whether I was the assaulting party, adding that they must agree with me that before their clergyman repeated a similar challenge he should make himself better acquainted with his own Bible. The men, who were, of course, Roman Catholics (I may add that there was not a Protestant within a mile or two of the place), did not show the least sign of disrespect—indeed, they appeared to be very much interested. After a little, my companion and I bade them good-bye, and proceeded somewhat triumphantly on our journey. Father Tom and I never came into open collision again. I had an opportunity soon afterwards of treating him with marked respect at a meeting of the Public Relief Committee; and we might sometimes have been seen riding for a short distance together, on our way from Ballina—he on his imposing parochial charger, and I on my small missionary pony. As far as I could ascertain, he was a man of kindly human instincts; but, like his companions in the priesthood, he was in the grip of a tyrant and tyrant-making system. He died in 1890.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In a letter to the *M. H.*, November, 1849, Dr. Edward M. Dill tells of a visit made a short time before by Mr. Timlin to one of our Mission schools, and of his taking up the Shorter Catechism and "in the civilest manner" asking the children a few questions out of it!

## CHAPTER VII.

### CONNAUGHT EXPERIENCES—(*continued*).

#### INCIDENTS OF SCHOOL LIFE.

ONE of the things that invariably excited the admiration and astonishment of Christian visitors was the brightness, vivacity, quickness, and unaffected simplicity of the school children—wholly free from all repressive influences of the *mauvaise honte* so common among young people, say, in Scotland or Ulster. On being asked a question relating to the Bible Lesson, or indeed to any subject whatsoever, if they thought they knew the reply, they would give it forth with exuberant promptness. If they did not know it, it did not make much difference—they would answer all the same. Hesitation, not inaccuracy, was with them the mortal sin. I must say, however, that as a rule they somehow got hold of the right reply, though they oftentimes had a very original way of giving expression to it.

#### BALLAGHADALLAGH SCHOOL (GIRLS AND BOYS).

There was, perhaps, no school in my district that for some years attracted more notice from visitors than the school of Ballaghadallagh. It lay about a mile from my own house, and was therefore within easy visiting distance. The teacher had been appointed by Mr. Brannigan. If I remember aright, he was one of Mr. Brannigan's original Irish teachers; and he had been a very pronounced Roman Catholic. Many of the Protestants, and all the Roman Catholics

in the neighbourhood, seemed to think that he had not made a very vital change in his religious convictions. He was in this respect a puzzle to me, though I felt sure that he was at least intellectually convinced of the errors of Romanism. But he did not impress me with the belief that he had been wholly delivered from the subtle thralldom of the Roman system. He was a man of very considerable ability, and his eye—partly that of an owl, partly that of an eagle—seemed constructed to search you through and through. He had formerly been the leading spirit in a Ribbon Lodge belonging to the district; and it greatly strengthened the suspicions of his Protestant neighbours regarding the sincerity of his present religious professions that the Ribbon drum continued to be suspended as of old from the grimy rafters of the schoolroom. Many a good Bible lesson, however, was given under that old drum; and many a heart—including, as I was often led to hope, that of the ex-Ribbon leader himself—was touched by the Divine simplicity of the Gospel story.

PHILIP O'FLAHERTY.

A very widely-extended interest was taken (it is now about fifty years ago) in the career of Philip O'Flaherty, the "Crimean soldier." Philip was originally a scholar in this school, and was one of the really remarkable young people who attended it. Like most of the others, he was of Roman Catholic parentage; and his father, I believe, had been much benefited by Mr. Brannigan's homely teaching. As to young Philip himself, he was at an early age as familiar with the Bible and the Shorter Catechism

as many of us were on going forward to our Examination for Licence. He afterwards removed to Ballinglen (Mr. Brannigan's district), where at the time a superior education was given under the auspices of the "Edinburgh Ladies' Association." In Ballinglen he became a member of the Church, in full communion, and greatly enjoyed the kindly pastoral oversight of Mr. Brannigan, whom he always called his "spiritual father." After some changes he entered the Army, and was soon found in the trenches before Sebastopol, working heartily with his still more widely-known fellow-labourer, Duncan Matheson. Through sheer force of character and ability (he had great gifts as a linguist) he, after some time, received an appointment as Interpreter on the Staff of Lord Raglan. His letters home, edited and published in pamphlet form by the Edinburgh Ladies' Association, attracted a large share of public attention.<sup>1</sup> On the conclusion of the Crimean War Philip proceeded to Edinburgh. Acting on the advice of Principal Candlish, he offered himself to the Church Missionary Society. Under that Society he went to Africa, and "for five years held the fort in Uganda." He was a great favourite of King Mtesa, and rendered important service in translating several books of the Old and New Testaments into the Uganda language. Having spent six years in Africa, he set his face homewards in order to visit his family in Edinburgh, but was seized with African fever during the voyage. After two days' illness he

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<sup>1</sup>Some of the titles were—*Philip O'Flaherty, the Young Soldier ; Sketches of the War*, by Philip O'Flaherty ; *The Early History of Philip O'Flaherty*, &c. Edinburgh : John Shepherd.

passed away, and his body was buried in the Red Sea.<sup>1</sup>

#### CELTIC PRECOCITY.

There were not a few of the Ballaghadallagh pupils whom I regarded at the time as even more able and promising than young O'Flaherty. Nearly all possessed the rapidity and versatility to which I have already referred. An intimate friend of my own, a good brother in the Ministry, who from the very outset had been deeply interested in the Connaught Mission, accompanied me to the school on one occasion, during a visit he paid to the West. The Scripture lesson for the day happened to be "The Rich Man and Lazarus." I requested my friend to conduct the examination. He felt that a propitious opportunity had come in his way for dealing a final blow at the doctrine of Purgatory. "Well, boys," he said, "where did the soul of Lazarus go when he died?" "To *hiven* (heaven), sir." "And where did the soul of the rich man go?" "To *hill* (hell), sir." "Now, boys, is there any place spoken of here, except these two places, heaven and hell?" "There is, sir," said a little fellow (I believe it was Pat Flanagan), as he held up his hand in token that he was charged with a reply. "What is it?" said the examiner, wondering what was coming. "The great gulf, your Riverence!" responded the young theologian. A shot from a revolver could not have startled the simple-minded man more effectually. The idea was absolutely new to him, and no satisfactory rejoinder

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<sup>1</sup> A fuller account is given in the *Irish Mission Field*, May, 1887. Dublin: "Irish Mission" Office.

of any kind presented itself to him just at the moment. He was seized with an uncontrollable fit of laughter, and, as far as he was concerned, the examination completely collapsed. On another day Mr. Brannigan accompanied me to the school, and he undertook the Scripture lesson. The subject for the day was one suggested by the Shorter Catechism, and arose out of the words—"God created man in His own image, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness." "You say," said Mr. Brannigan, "that God created man in His own image *in knowledge*. Prove to me that Adam was possessed of great knowledge." Patsy O'Shea (he was about ten or eleven years of age) at once held up his hand. "Well, Patsy, what have you to say to that?" "Whin God Almighty," said Patsy, "axed Adam what he would hev (have), he said he would hev a *com-e-rade* (comrade)," referring to what Patsy regarded as a very sagacious desire of our great progenitor to be provided with a suitable partner. This is the same little fellow who attracted the notice of Dr. Duff when we were honoured in the year 1851 by a visit from this distinguished missionary.<sup>1</sup> The children from the different schools were brought together into the Presbyterian "Meeting-house" on that exceptional occasion. The Doctor was illustrating the instances mentioned in the Gospels in which our Lord had restored the dead to life. "Now, children," he asked, "how long could

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<sup>1</sup> My friend, Mr. J. D. Carnegie, with whom Dr. Duff resided when in Ballina, tells me that the Doctor on this occasion was reverently spoken of by the Roman Catholic people of Ballina as "the great Presbyterian Bishop."



a person live without food?" "Three days, your riverence," said Patsy, quick as lightning—and *Patsy knew*, for he had come through "Black Forty-seven." But Dr. Duff was immensely amused, and for a short time he certainly seemed to lose his characteristic gravity. He had had experience as an educationalist such as falls to few men, but he testified that he had never met with such extraordinary readiness and resourcefulness of reply as from these Celtic children of Connaught.

A SABBATH EVENING SERVICE—AN INQUIRER.

Besides the daily school, there was from the time of my first entrance on the work a Sabbath afternoon service in Ballaghadallagh. It was, I believe, begun by Mr. M'Gregor. It was a most picturesque and encouraging little gathering, consisting almost wholly of Roman Catholics. The meeting was conducted in an informal way, and was made as real and living as possible. Questions were allowed to be asked, and for the most part they were the outcome of an earnest desire for true spiritual enlightenment. On my way home I was generally accompanied, until they diverged on the various by-ways which led off from the main road, by a considerable section of my congregation, and the conversation was almost always on the Scripture topic which had been engaging our attention. Some of these interesting conversations I remember to the present hour.

One of my hearers, Mrs. —, a Roman Catholic, was prominent among them, a person of rare intellectual ability, and at the same time an intensely earnest inquirer. I must devote one or two paragraphs to the statement of her case, as it is a

somewhat representative one, and raises a number of practical questions which lie at the very heart of Irish Mission work.

Mrs. — had not only been a Roman Catholic (as were all her relatives)—she was a most steadfast devotee. For long years she had been weighed down, as Luther had been in the Augustinian Monastery at Erfurt, under a heavy load of conscious sin. She had tried all the expedients her Church prescribed for getting rid of her great burden. As far as these expedients were concerned she could almost boast, with Paul, that “touching the righteousness which is of the law she was blameless.” In a letter of hers written many years ago, which is now before me, she says:—“Before my conversion I must say I was very anxious about the salvation of my immortal soul. I fasted, performed penances, and said many prayers to satisfy God, as I thought, for my sins. I went twenty miles from home to holy wells to perform stations. I performed the Stations of the Cross every Sunday on my knees. I wore the scapular, or habit of the Virgin Mary; the ring of St. Joseph; the cord of St. Francis; and said seven ‘Paters’ and ‘Aves’ every day in honour of each of the three. To be brief, I did all in my power to work out my own salvation. Notwithstanding all these mortifications, I found no peace until a light from heaven shone upon my soul, and, like the Star in the East, led me to Him who is the way, the truth, and the life.”

“A LITTLE CHILD SHALL LEAD THEM.”

In the good Providence of God the light reached

her thus. Some of her children had been attending the Ballaghadallagh School, above referred to. They there learned to sing the simple Gospel hymns,<sup>1</sup> which at that time were such an extraordinary attraction to the young people—an attraction all the greater from their never having heard anything of the kind before. Our pupils often acted, without knowing it, as Missionaries in their own homes through the rehearsal of these hymns; and it was not uncommon to hear Roman Catholic mothers in the fields or along the roadsides singing them to their children. One of the hymns carried by Mrs. —'s little girls to their home was the familiar one beginning:

" I lay my sins on Jesus,  
The spotless Lamb of God. \_  
He bears them all, and frees us  
From the accursed load."

It at once arrested her attention. It was like a message from God to her sin-stricken spirit, and it *was* a message from God. Through all the years of laborious penance she had undergone, her burden of sin had only seemed to increase with every new humiliation her Church imposed on her. Here she learned in simple phrase, which seemed to go straight to her heart, of the great Burden-bearer whom God Himself had provided for sinners like herself. For some time she was in much the same condition as Christian in *The Pilgrim's Progress*, when Evangelist, pointing to the wicket-gate, put the question to him: "Do you see yonder light?" "I *think* I do," he replied. Mrs. — saw the light in the distance, or thought she did—that was all as yet.

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<sup>1</sup> *Bateman's Melodies*. Edinburgh: Gall & Son.

But it was "the true light" she saw, though imperfectly. She soon felt impelled to venture out to the Sabbath evening class with her children. She was very deeply impressed by the Bible doctrine of a complete, present salvation through simple trust in Christ. After some time she made herself known to me, telling me her story ; but, as is very common in such cases, she said she could not trust what she had been led to look upon as a "lying Bible." I got her a Douay Bible.<sup>1</sup> She found that the Douay Bible practically agreed with the Authorised or Protestant version in its main testimony. Both represented salvation as the free gift of God through Jesus Christ, requiring from us nothing but that we were willing from the heart to accept it. She continued to attend the Sabbath evening meeting in Ballaghadallagh schoolroom, and later on the weekly Bible Class in the Mullafary Presbyterian Church. Finally she became a communicant ; and I never admitted anyone to the Lord's Table regarding whom I had a firmer conviction that she was a living member of Christ's Mystical Body.

A NOT UNUSUAL IRISH MISSION PROBLEM.

But her troubles were just commencing. Her open identification of herself with Protestantism, as a matter of course, aroused the fiercest hostility of the priest, and, largely through his influence, of members of his flock. Her husband was a tradesman, and generally earned good wages. The neighbours would now give him no employment.

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<sup>1</sup> I do not think that copies of the Douay Testament (without Notes) were then available.

Her elder children turned against her. This was all to be expected, and was in a sense natural. But the general attitude of the Protestants of the district was not so natural. Very many who knew nothing of her brave religious struggles treated her with a suspicion which they did not even wish to conceal. Current criticisms of her attendance at the Presbyterian Church—made, it may be, without much thought—reached her from day to day, and certainly without any diminution of their asperity; and, as she herself expressed it, they “bit her like a cancer.” In reference to her and a number of other intelligent Roman Catholics who attended the large weekly Bible class, someone was reported to have given utterance to the highly evangelistic observation that “there never was such trash in the Church.”<sup>1</sup> I do not mean to convey that this spirit was universal. Good Christian people, of whom we had many in dear old Mullafary, simply suspended judgment, hoping for the best. No more could have been reasonably looked for in the circumstances. But a deep spirit, not only of distrust but of actual hostility, pervaded a large portion of the Protestant community. What I wish especially to emphasize is, the situation which this created for a true Christian convert—supposing for the moment that Mrs. — was such. On the one side she was denounced and hunted by all as an apostate; on the other she was, by most, branded as an impostor. *What was she to do?* She had an infant at her breast; her older

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<sup>1</sup> The treatment experienced by the members of the Mullafary congregation at the hands of the insurgents in 1798 (see Note F) must be borne in mind as having greatly accentuated this bitter feeling.

children were in league against her; her husband was wandering idle through the fields because of the course she had taken, and he threatened to drive her from the shelter of the roof under which her children had been born. She could not be received into the poorhouse; she was not able, with or without her infant, to beg her way from door to door. WHAT WAS SHE TO DO? I affirm that, situated as she was, it would have been an easier thing for her to go to the stake (in which case her troubles would have been soon over) than to continue her attendance on our Presbyterian services, or on any Protestant services whatsoever throughout the entire district. I earnestly ask my Christian readers, especially those who may have thought much about this peculiar aspect of our Irish work, to ponder the matter over amid their own more helpful environments, and say what they would have done in the circumstances. I am satisfied that this poor woman never again surrendered herself to the more distinctive doctrines of modern Romanism. I do not think she ever went back to Mass. But she ceased to go to the Presbyterian Church; and, as far as an open profession of Protestantism went, she seemed to have returned to her old beliefs. Those who had helped to make her position absolutely unendurable were, I suppose, satisfied. They "*knew* how it would all end." Yes, of course they did. They had at least done their best to fulfil their own predictions. But in such cases—let us thank God for it—human judgments are not final. Jesus still "finds" many whom men in their rancorous zeal have "cast out of their synagogues."

## CHAPTER VIII.

### CONNAUGHT EXPERIENCES (*continued*).

#### INCIDENTS OF SCHOOL LIFE.

##### FOXBOROUGH INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL.

It will suffice to refer only to another of the schools in the district of Mullafary, and to one or two incidents connected with it. Not far from Ballaghadallagh there was one of Mr. Brannigan's Industrial Schools. The teacher was an earnest Christian young woman, from Saintfield, County Down.<sup>1</sup> The schoolhouse was a small cabin of very unpretentious appearance. At the time of which I write it sheltered as interesting and interested a class of young Irish girls as you could have found anywhere. Most of the pupils were the children of Roman Catholic parents; but after a short course of teaching many of them might almost be said to have become adepts in Biblical knowledge. We treated them with more respect and consideration than they had been accustomed to receive from their religious instructors, and they heartily reciprocated our kindness. I do not think that there could have been heard, outside of Ireland, anything more bright and musical than there simultaneous salutation—"You're heartily welcome, sir!" When occasionally absent from the district for some weeks on deputa-

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<sup>1</sup> When Mr. Allen entered upon his duties as Superintendent of the Connaught Schools (Mr. Brannigan's) he introduced a number of industrial teachers from the North of Ireland.

tion work in Ulster or Scotland, I was delighted to accept their invitation to a *soirée* in the schoolhouse, the expense of which they insisted on paying out of their own scant earnings. My approach was heralded by bonfires, which, I fear, laid all the available *whins* in the neighbourhood under tribute.

A FOXBOROUGH SCHOLAR.

Let me recall one little history out of many somewhat similar. A Roman Catholic girl (I shall call her N. N.) was a pupil in this school.<sup>2</sup> She was, in the first instance, attracted by the sewed muslin work. She was so bigoted that, on first joining the school, she was accustomed to put her fingers in her ears during the Bible lesson, lest she should hear a single word out of the dreaded Book. The hymns which the girls delighted to sing while at their work were the first things to attract her interest. She heard in them, she was obliged to acknowledge, nothing that could do her harm; in fact, she felt that they did her good. By-and-by she began to listen to the Bible lesson, and ultimately it came to be to her a daily delight. Under the teaching of the Divine Spirit she decided wholly for Christ. Her changed demeanour attracted much notice in the parish, and she was denounced by the priest from the altar. Circumstances rendered it necessary that she should emigrate to the United States. The last day she spent in Ireland was occupied in placing a border of green sods around the little white-washed

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<sup>2</sup> The facts here given regarding this young person were made public at the time in some of the Missionary magazines, and they may possibly be familiar to a few readers of these pages.



schoolhouse in which, almost against her will, the light of saving truth had first shone into her soul. She sailed from Sligo under the priest's curse. On her arrival in the United States she joined the Presbyterian Church, and at her own request<sup>1</sup> was re-baptized. In letters written me from time to time by her Minister, he again and again testified that she was the most devoted Christian-worker he had in his congregation—an example and stimulus to all the others. For many years she continued to write me, always addressing me as "My dear Pastor." In a letter which lies before me, written nine years after she had left Ireland, she says: "I hope you do not think I have forgotten you. I never remember bowing my knees in prayer that I did not pray for you, my dear Minister."

INDIRECT RESULTS—"The Lord shall count."

In all Mission work the indirect results are often as remarkable and encouraging as the more direct. N. N. left behind her, in Ireland, a younger sister, called Mary. Mary, when a child, had also attended the school; but, like many others, she had not attracted any very special notice. She grew up in a typical Roman Catholic district, into which, if you passed through it, you would find it hard to believe that any ray of pure Gospel light had ever penetrated. I had not remembered Mary. Judge of my astonishment and thankfulness when, some years after she had gone to America, N. wrote me to tell of the death of the dear little sister whom she had

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<sup>1</sup> The necessity of re-baptism, in such cases, was no part of our teaching.

left behind. The following letter, written from her Connaught home, was enclosed ; it tells its own story :—

“ MY DEAR, DEAR, AND LOVING SISTER,—

“ It is from my bed of pain I write you. I got your letter, N. It found me living. Your aunt was glad, but I was gladder. You are dearer to me than ever. I often dream that you are with me ; but when I waken you are far from me. You will never carry me to school again ; them was good times. I cannot tell you what I suffered these five years. Oh, my sister, I wish I could see you and tell you how I love Christ ! I trust His blood has washed my sins away. I am happy with my lot. Dear sister, I thought last night was my last. Uncle fixed your bed of flowers ; he took me to see your rose-bush, but I will never see it bloom. I hope to be where the flowers never fade. Dear N., write to me soon if I am living. It is not so hard to die, after all. Do not be startled if the next is my dead letter. Oh, my dear sister, must I bid you farewell on earth ? Tell dear mother not to weep for me. Tell William that I want him to meet me in heaven. I told mother to be kind to you. Pray for her, my dear N. I know that my dear mother took it hard when she got my letter ; but tell her that her little Mary is going where she will not need to write any more letters to tell of her sorrows. No more from your loving sister in Jesus Christ,

“ MARY.”<sup>1</sup>

Now, what I wish specially to emphasize is that the writer of this letter never outwardly left the Church of Rome at all, and that for some years she

<sup>1</sup> In the communication enclosing this letter to me, N. N. says : “ My cousin William wrote me from England, telling me that I was not odd in the family ; that sister Mary and him hope to meet me in heaven. I give the Lord thanks that He ever sent you to Connaught to tell us of Jesus Christ.”

had been practically unknown to any Protestant Church or agency. She was indebted to her sister for most of the spiritual instruction she ever received. She was, of course, attended by the priest in her dying moments. Her friends and neighbours would see (especially after N.'s apostasy) that there was no neglect there. All those rites of the Church which were wont to fall to the lot of the poor were, doubtless, administered to her. There was no Protestant at hand to whisper a word of Gospel invitation or promise in her ear. It is almost certain that there was no Protestant at her funeral; and her body was laid in a graveyard which had probably never been polluted by any heretic dust. Had some of us written Mary's epitaph, not knowing the circumstances, it would possibly have been a gloomy enough one. I trust there are few, if any, of my readers who will have difficulty in believing that she is among those whose names have a place in God's Book of Remembrance, and of whom it is written: "They shall be Mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels."

It would be easy to extend this part of the narrative, but I do not deem it necessary. The details of Mission work are in substance much the same everywhere. It is enough to say that after the long interval of fifty years, many humble names and histories start up vividly before the eye of memory of dear young people belonging to the schools under my care, whose cases were, in all essential particulars, as full of interest as any that have been referred to. Others of my brethren had much more success in their work than ever fell to my lot. Many

of the more striking incidents of the Mission were noticed at the time in the *Missionary Herald* or similar publications. But the quieter and, it may be, more encouraging results were never reported, and could not be. These await the Day when hidden things shall be revealed.

#### FINAL ORGANIZATION OF THE WORK.

In a comparatively short time the various districts of the Mission came to be arranged as follows. In the carrying out of the necessary details there is no doubt that Mr. Allen, acting under the authority of the General Assembly, and with the full concurrence of the Presbytery, exercised a jurisdiction which, without being prelatical, was certainly episcopal. It was an episcopacy, however, or a semi-episcopacy, which was most useful, and in the circumstances most necessary. The subjoined tabular statement has reference mainly to the period during which I was myself resident in Connaught:—

DISTRICTS.	MISSIONARIES.	REMARKS.
1. <i>Ballinglen</i>	REV. MICHAEL BRANNIGAN	Ordained First Students' Missionary by the Presbytery of Tyrone, 24th June, 1845. Died 15th November, 1874.
2. <i>Dromore West</i>	REV. MATTHEW KERR	Entered on work, June, 1848. Ordained 8th Aug., 1849, with Mr. Hamilton Magee. Resigned 11th July, 1862, on being appointed Munster Itinerant Missionary. Died 5th Feb., 1900.

## Final Organization of the Work.

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DISTRICTS.	MISSIONARIES.	REMARKS.
3. <i>Ballina</i>	REV. THOMAS ARMSTRONG	Ordained 6th May, 1846. Succeeded Mr. Allen in 1865 as Superintendent of Connaught Schools. Re- tired 1st October, 1895. Died 23rd December, 1897.
„	REV. ROBERT ALLEN, General Superin- tendent Schools	Ordained 7th June, 1814. Settled in Ballina summer of 1848. Died 1st April, 1865.
4. <i>Fortfield</i> ( <i>Crossmolina</i> )	REV. MALCOLM MACGREGOR	Came to Ireland 1847. Returned to Scotland May, 1854, and ordained as minister of Free Church, Gartly, N.B.
5. <i>Westport</i>	REV. DAVID ADAIR	Ordained 8th May, 1846. Died 17th November, 1854.
„	REV. RICHARD SMYTH	Entered on work 1854. Ordained 20th June, 1855. Left for First Derry 7th April, 1857.
„	REV. JOHN JAMES BLACK	Ordained 8th September, 1857. Resigned (to remove to Ormond Quay, Dublin) 3rd May, 1859.
6. <i>Turlough</i> ( <i>Castlebar</i> )	REV. JOHN HAMILTON	Ordained 12th May, 1824. Died 1st May, 1854.
„	REV. ANDREW BROWN	Ordained 20th Septem- ber, 1854. Resigned to remove to Hollymount, 31st December, 1862.
7. <i>Foxford</i>	REV. JOSEPH DONALDSON	Came to Connaught November, 1848. Ordained by Presbytery of Monaghan, 8th November, 1849. Re- signed 1851.

DISTRICTS.	MISSIONARIES.	REMARKS.
8. <i>Ballymote</i>	REV. JOHN DEWART	Ordained 9th October, 1850, along with Mr. (afterwards Dr.) John Hall, Camlin. Died 12th February, 1895.
9. <i>Hollymount</i>	REV. JAMES LOVE	Ordained 16th March, 1854. Left for Queensland 11th April, 1862.
„	REV. ANDREW BROWN (formerly of Turlough)	Installed 17th February, 1863.
10. <i>Clogher</i>	Supplied by Messrs. THOMAS YOUNG KILLEN (afterwards Dr.), JOHN HALL (afterwards Dr.), and JOHN DEWART on alternate Sabbaths till 1851.	
	REV. JOHN BARNETT	Came to Connaught as Students' Missionary, 1851. Ordained 5th October, 1852. Removed to Carlow 13th May, 1856.
11. <i>Camlin</i> ( <i>Boyle</i> )	REV. JOHN EDMONDS (of Tully)	Occasionally.
„	REV. (afterwards Dr.) T. V. KILLEN	Arrived in Camlin, May, 1847. After completing College course in Belfast returned to Camlin 20th July, 1848. Left May, 1849. Ordained in Third Ramelton 25th September, 1850.

## Final Organization of the Work.

DISTRICTS.	MISSIONARIES.	REMARKS.
11. <i>Camlin</i> ( <i>Boyle</i> )	REV. (afterwards Dr.) JOHN HALL	Arrived as Students' Missionary June, 1849. Ordained 9th October, 1850, along with Rev. John Dewart. Left for First Armagh 14th January, 1852.
„	REV. JAMES ROBINSON	Ordained 15th December, 1852, along with Rev. John Ashmore, Creevelea. Died 27th June, 1858.
12. <i>Bealderig</i>	REV. DAVID FERGUSON	Entered on work November, 1852. Ordained in Portlaw 31st May, 1854.
13. <i>Muliasfary</i> ( <i>Killala</i> )	REV. DAVID RODGERS	Ordained 11th September, 1820. Resigned July, 1848. Died 4th June, 1859.
„	REV. (afterwards Dr.) HAMILTON MAGEE	Entered on work 17th July, 1848. Ordained 8th August, 1849 (with Mr. Matthew Kerr). Resigned on appointment to Dublin Mission 18th January, 1854.
„	REV. JOHN WILSON	Ordained 14th March, 1854. Left 30th September, 1862, for Queensland.
14. <i>Creevelea</i> ( <i>Drumkeeran</i> )	REV. JOHN ASHMORE	Ordained 15th December, 1852, along with Mr. James Robinson, Camlin.
15. <i>Newport</i> ( <i>Co. Mayo</i> )	REV. GEORGE. S. KEEGAN	Ordained 16th March, 1854. Died 10th May, 1890.
16. <i>Newpark</i> ( <i>Co. Sligo</i> )	Supplied 1850 and afterwards by REV. JOHN DEWART, Ballymote.	

DISTRICTS.	MISSIONARIES.	REMARKS.
17. <i>Castlerea</i> ( <i>Co. Roscommon</i> )	REV. ROBERT ALEX. CALDWELL	Ordained in Boyle 26th May, 1857. Resigned 30th September, 1863, to emi- grate to Australia.

These districts covered a very considerable area, and were for the most part in North Connaught. Frequent opportunities presented themselves to the Missionaries of visiting the different parts of the field ; and everywhere the different features of the work were found to be the same. In none of the districts did we discern, as far at least as our pupils were concerned, what has been somewhat despairingly called "the hard quarry of the Irish heart." Our bright young scholars, boys and girls, were uniformly most amenable, most appreciative, most deeply grateful. They were drawn to the Bible lesson as to no other. Even during the few years I spent in the West, some thousands had passed through the schools ; and there was not a Missionary agent among us who was not fully persuaded that many of them, together with not a few of their relatives and friends, had learned savingly at the feet of the Great Teacher Himself.



## CHAPTER IX.

### CONNAUGHT EXPERIENCES (*Continued*).

OWING to personal intimacy with the Missionaries immediately in charge, there were a few of the districts which I could not but regard with exceptional interest.

#### DROMORE WEST.

Dromore West, though in a different county, and by public road through Ballina about twenty miles off, almost abutted at the mouth of the River Moy on the district of Mullafary; and Matthew Kerr and I were wont to exchange mutually helpful visits, crossing the ferry near Enniscrone. In the humble cottage in the bog which served him as a manse, my ever-to-be-remembered friend, with an amount of Christian prudence, self-denial, courage, persistency of purpose, disregard of human comforts (I had almost said of human opinion), which I have never seen surpassed, carried on a work which made this historic station in many respects one of the most remarkable in the entire Connaught field. Even Dr. Edgar's eloquent pen seemed to catch a new inspiration when he wrote of the favoured district in which Matthew Kerr exercised his early Ministry:—

"What could a niggard spirit ask," writes Dr. Edgar, "to meet its fictitious scruples, that this Mission of the West does not give? Take any individual congregation—Dromore West, for example—and examine its state and its history. It commenced in a bog, where a few cabins cut into a turf-bank, without chimney or window, still remain

to show what man's habitation once was there ; and it held its meetings in a barn, where sod or stone supplied the place of stool and chair, and all around was the wild moor, a mountain still more wild, with here and there, far-scattered, a lone Protestant, who heard no Gospel preached, and to whom the word "Presbyterian" was unknown ; while crowded dense upon little patches of potato-ground scratched out of bog or moor, starved a wretched priest-ridden horde of idle pauper tenants and cottiers, under a landlord who, when the potato blight came, found himself hopelessly ruined. The change effected after seven or eight years may be seen by every traveller on the Queen's highway. That congregation has a fixed Pastor now, and such a Pastor as all the Churches know the Minister of Dromore West to be. That Pastor has so established and spread industrial employment that every little girl finds a livelihood ; he has Sunday schools and six daily schools under his charge, through which more than twelve hundred children have passed, carrying with them the knowledge of the way of salvation ; he has under him Irish readers and catechists ; in two of the places where he stately preaches he has one hundred and forty people in attendance, thirty of whom were once Romanists ; while in his handsome little church, with the whole face of the country around it delightfully changed, not only has he an overflowing congregation, but his Missionary collections—never so large as in the present year—bear the following proportions to those of the congregations of Ulster :—*The average amount of the five Missionary collections in ten large congregations of ten Presbyteries, including Down, Ballymena, and Belfast, is £6 6s. 0d., while the collections of Dromore West are £23 11s. 6d.*"—(*M. H.*, August, 1856, p. 91.)

#### CAMLIN AND CLOGHER.

Camlin and Clogher lay to the south-east of the wide area covered by the Mission. They were both

connected with what we were accustomed to call Dr. Edgar's section of the work, the schools being supported and superintended by the Belfast Ladies' Association for Connaught. In his *Memoir* of Dr. Edgar, Dr. Killen gives a most graphic account of the opening up of these stations through the self-denying devotion and energy of two resident Episcopal ladies—Mrs. Irwin,<sup>1</sup> Camlin House, and Miss Elizabeth Holmes, Clogher House. Both of these ladies threw their great influence into the work in their respective districts—the gifts of the Holmes family especially being on a munificent scale. The sending of Thomas Young Killen by Dr. Edgar to Camlin in the summer of 1847, on what might be called a tentative mission, proved to be a most important incident in the history of the entire work. After completing his College course during the winter of 1847-8, and obtaining licence, he returned to Camlin in the beginning of the following July, remaining for about a year, when he accepted a call to Ramelton. He was succeeded by John Hall, afterwards of New York, who was sent under the auspices of the Students' Missionary Association. Some of Mr. Hall's letters, written at this time, now lie before me, in which he earnestly discusses the question of his joining the Western Mission. In the light of his future career there is nothing more remarkable in this correspondence than the trepidation, arising from a sense of unfitness, with which he accepted this humble appointment. Not long after his settlement in Camlin, Matthew Kerr and I paid him a visit, travelling on our Missionary steeds

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<sup>1</sup> Afterwards Mrs. (Dr.) John Hall, of New York.

by the road leading over the Curlew Mountains. We arrived while our friend was engaged in conducting an evening service in the adjacent school-house. As we could not enter the meeting without disturbing the proceedings, it must be acknowledged that we yielded to the temptation of playing the part of eavesdroppers underneath one of the windows. The cottage address we heard was characterised by all the simplicity, directness, persuasiveness, and unpretending eloquence which afterwards won for him such a distinguished position among the great evangelical preachers of his day. My friend Kerr and I simultaneously ventured on the prophecy that he would not be permitted to remain long in Camlin. Our prophecy received a speedy fulfilment, as in January, 1852, he was installed in the important congregation of First Armagh. He did not leave Connaught till he had completed the work which Mr. Killen had begun, in laying the foundation of a permanent congregation in the neighbouring town of Boyle—a congregation which, including its admirable educational appliances, has for many years been recognised as one of the most vigorous centres of Presbyterian influence in the province.

#### BALLINGLEN.

We all looked to Ballinglen as in a real sense the most genuinely “Irish” district of the Mission. This was owing to the remarkable personality and Missionary qualifications of Mr. Brannigan, and to the leading part he had taken in the opening up of the entire field. In Ballinglen, near the bleak northern seaboard of Mayo, there had gathered

around him a considerable body of people, a large proportion of whom had originally been Roman Catholics. At first, as might have been expected, some who became adherents of the Mission did not evince any very intimate acquaintance with Biblical story. I remember having at an early period of my Connaught life occupied the pulpit at Ballinglen while Mr. Brannigan was absent, I believe in Scotland. My text was the familiar one, "Felix trembled," and my remarks were not, I suppose, very complimentary to that historic personage. Mr. Brannigan's son Felix was present, if I mistake not, on the occasion; and one of the members of the congregation, who was a devoted admirer of his kindly Pastor, indignantly remarked to a neighbour on his way from church that if Mr. Brannigan had been at home I would have "let Master Felix alone." Mr. Brannigan was eminently qualified to unfold the plan of salvation to such unsophisticated hearers, and many precious souls were, I doubt not, won for Christ in this secluded glen and the surrounding neighbourhood. An important work was carried on in Ballinglen for many years by the Edinburgh Ladies' Association. A school of a somewhat advanced kind and a Model Farm were established, which accomplished great good. They were superintended with sedulous care by Christian friends from Edinburgh, whose interest in the spiritual and temporal welfare of the people of Connaught was beyond all praise.

#### BALLINA ORPHANAGE AND REFUGE HOME.

This institution, which afterwards occupied so prominent a position in the Mission, was founded in

the year 1854. Mr. Allen had long been convinced of the necessity of such a Refuge. He tells us that his resolve to found a Mission Home was finally decided by the circumstances of a poor widow and her two daughters having been driven out into the open streets of Ballina on a Saturday night at the instigation of the parish priest. A small house was rented, and soon filled with orphans who had been made homeless through their attachment to Bible truth. The accommodation, however, was found to be inadequate, and some change became necessary. At this crisis Mr. Stewart, a generous Christian merchant of Manchester, came to his aid and helped him to provide a more suitable building. It was in this way that the Connaught Orphanage and Refuge Home, around which in after years so many loving sympathies gathered, was started on its career of usefulness. Though not founded till the year in which I left Connaught, I afterwards became intimately acquainted with a considerable number of the pupils who had been its inmates, under the superintendence of Mr. Allen and subsequently of Mr. Armstrong; and I have always felt that the history of many of them—their difficulties, persecutions, struggles, loyalty to conscience and to God, were as interesting and thrilling as the romance of Missions in any part of the world.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Owing to changes in the conditions of the country, it was considered necessary to close the Orphanage in the year 1900. Provision was made otherwise for the remaining inmates. The Connaught Schools at the same time ceased to be connected with the Irish Mission, and the scheme under which they are worked has been enlarged so as to include schools in any Roman Catholic district.

SCOTTISH CO-OPERATION.

The old records of our Church show that almost from the time of the Plantation a number of Ministers and Licentiates were employed, with more or less regularity, in preaching the Gospel in the Irish tongue throughout various parts of the country. In this work valuable help was rendered by Gaelic Missionaries from Scotland. Reference has already been made to the notable efforts of Dr. Norman Macleod, of Campsie, in the same direction.<sup>1</sup> Coming down to a later date, we find that a Ladies' Association was formed in Glasgow, under the patronage of her Grace the Duchess of Argyll, the object of which was "the Scriptural instruction of the Irish-speaking population through the medium of their native tongue." This Association is stated to be "only one of several similar societies in Scotland." The Birr and Kerry Missions were largely indebted to Scottish help, not only in the matter of finance, but much more in that of lofty personal service. In his Annual Appeal to our people on behalf of this Home work in October, 1845 (previous to the Famine, be it observed), Dr. Edgar acknowledged "the noble generosity of the Free Church<sup>2</sup> in contributing to the Mission during the previous year half as much as all our congregations." This generous interest seems to have reached its height on the publication in November of the following year of the *Cry from Connaught*. A number of Ministers—including such distinguished men as the Revs. Moody Stuart, of

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<sup>1</sup> See page 20.

<sup>2</sup> The Disruption had taken place in 1843

Edinburgh; William Arnot, of Glasgow; Andrew A. Bonar, of Collace; William Ferrie; William Campbell, of Melrose; J. W. Taylor, of Flisk; and, at a later period, Dr. Duff, of Calcutta—visited Connaught (most of them in 1847) with the view of inquiring personally into the position of affairs, and most of them on their return home published pamphlets in which they vividly recorded their experiences, and strongly urged upon their Christian friends whole-hearted co-operation in the good work that had been inaugurated. Scotland responded heroically to the challenge. In addition to invaluable help given to local objects by individuals and voluntary organizations, the Free Church for several years took up congregational collections in aid of the Mission, and by arrangement with our Board of Directors a few Scottish Ministers and Catechists were sent over into the field to occupy selected spheres of work. The Edinburgh Ladies' Association, of which Miss Charlotte Pringle was the devoted honorary secretary, organized and conducted an important work in Ballinglen, the district in which Mr. Brannigan laboured. It was mainly at the urgent suggestion of this Association that the Rev. Robert Allen was appointed "Superintendent of the Connaught Mission," they generously undertaking the financial responsibility connected with the appointment.<sup>1</sup> In 1849 Scotland supported more than the half of Mr. Brannigan's Mission Schools.<sup>2</sup> Early in our Missionary career my friend, Matthew Kerr, and I were called to visit the various Scottish

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<sup>1</sup>*M. H.*, I., p. 604.

<sup>2</sup>*M. H.*, I., p. 691.



Associations in connection with the Central Committees in Edinburgh and Glasgow. We traversed a great part of the country from the Tweed up to Moray Firth, and we were deeply impressed by the sacred interest which was everywhere manifested on behalf of the work in Connaught. It is not too much to say that the Connaught Mission could not have been organized in the form or on anything like the scale it finally attained if it had not been for the generous co-operation of the Christian people of Scotland.

#### DECLINING ATTENDANCE OF SCHOLARS.

In the course of a few years the attendance of the children began sensibly to decline. There were many things to account for this. The parish priests, partly at their own instance, and still more under the compulsion of their ecclesiastical superiors, began to manifest an unwonted interest in the establishment of National Schools. "Along almost every mile of road," wrote one of the Missionaries at the time (and his testimony was by no means exceptional) "a school of some kind has been established." Education for their children without the danger of heretical interference was everywhere brought within easy reach of parents; and the clergy employed their own peculiar methods of forcing this condition of affairs on the attention of their parishioners. There was in fact an extraordinary resuscitation of priestly activity. During the years of the Famine the priests had certainly lost greatly in popular esteem. A general feeling prevailed among the members of their flocks that

they had been lacking in sympathy with them when the distress was at its worst; so that many who visited Connaught at the time carried away with them the conviction that priestly domination had received a blow from which it appeared hardly possible it could ever recover. But let appearances be what they may, the Church of Rome unfalteringly believes in her commission and in her destiny. She knows how to wait; and it was as certain as anything could be, that, sooner or later, she would put forth a huge, resolute, and unscrupulous effort to recover her old position. The people were now in more comfortable circumstances; the educational wants of their children had been to a large extent provided for by the State; the outlook of the country was altogether more reassuring; and it will not surprise anyone who is acquainted with Ireland that the Roman Catholic clergy gradually regained much of their former ascendancy.<sup>1</sup>

#### EMIGRATION.

Our schools were also largely depleted by the immense emigration which set in after the Famine. Up till 1851, 1,174,311 persons had emigrated to the United States and British North America alone.<sup>2</sup> There was also an extensive emigration to

<sup>1</sup> In his Home Mission Report for 1852, Dr. Edgar speaks of 2,000 pupils in attendance—in 1854 the numbers, he said, had shrunk to 870.

<sup>2</sup> From 1847 till 1851, inclusive, the Irish in America, the great majority of them living on an humble daily wage, sent to their relatives at home no less a sum than £3,148,697.—*The Great Famine*, pp. 252-255. This statement, so creditable to the Irish poor, is made on the authority of a Parliamentary Return. A large proportion of the money thus sent was applied to emigration purposes.

England and Scotland. In 1854, Dr. Edgar reported that "within the last few years not less than one thousand individuals, chiefly young, have emigrated from two of our contiguous Missionary districts, all of whom had been in our congregations, prayer meetings, or schools." As far as I can remember, Mullafary was one of the districts referred to ; all the districts were, however, much in the same position. The continuous exodus was most trying to the Missionaries and teachers. But it had its compensations. In the great majority of cases it meant a change from poverty, persecution, altar denunciation, and the host of almost intolerable evils which they entailed, to comparative plenty and full religious liberty. As Richard Smyth, then of Westport (afterwards Professor Smyth, M.P.), said at the time, "all our pupils carried with them wherever they went the lifelong conviction, 'I have a right to read the Bible.'" The subsequent history of many of these young people became in various ways intimately known to us. Large numbers of them became earnest members of Evangelical Churches in America and elsewhere ; not a few entered the Christian Ministry or became Missionaries ; and some attained the position of Professors in American Colleges. When Drs. John Edgar, David Wilson, and S. M. Dill visited the United States in 1859 as deputies from our Assembly to advocate the claims of the Irish Mission, they testified on their return home that there was scarcely a meeting held by them in any city or town during their immense campaign, at the close of which well-dressed young Irishmen and

women did not come to them and bid them God-speed, declaring with deep emotion that they themselves were living witnesses of the blessing that had attended the work. Mr. Allen had a similar report to give of his experiences in England and Scotland.<sup>1</sup> There was much truth in the statement made by a Western Bishop, whose authority had been invoked to suppress certain Industrial Schools in his diocese: "It is, alas! too true," he declared from the altar, "that nine-tenths of the scholars who go to America desert Holy Mother Church altogether."

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<sup>1</sup>I have repeatedly heard the same testimony borne by the Rev. Thomas Armstrong and other deputies.

## CHAPTER X.

### CONNAUGHT EXPERIENCES.—A RETROSPECT.

I SPENT nearly five and a half years in connection with our Mission in the West, and I have never ceased to thank God for the privilege of being associated with a work so rich in sacred memories. Before proceeding with the next part of my story, I should like to notice a few points which have been more or less directly referred to in the preceding statement.

#### A PRESBYTERY OF BROTHERLY LOVE.

Attention has already been directed to the fact that the Connaught Mission was formally inaugurated in the Students' Prayer Meeting and Missionary Association; but as this circumstance had an important bearing on the future of the work, an additional paragraph may be permitted here. The Mission was afterwards largely manned by the members of the Prayer Meeting. At the ordination, on the 15th December, 1852, of two Missionaries—Mr. John Ashmore, to Creevelea, and Mr. James Robinson, to Camlin—twelve Ministers were present, of whom eight had been members of the Students' Missionary Association. Seven<sup>1</sup> of them

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<sup>1</sup>My old friend and co-presbyter, the Rev. John Ashmore, has sent me a list of their names—M. Kerr, H. Magee, J. Dewart, John Barnett, Andrew Brown, James Robinson, John Ashmore. The Rev. Lowry E. Berkeley, of Lurgan, was also present. In his letter Mr. Ashmore very feelingly recalls the "freshness and hopefulness of our early work in Connaught."

were now members of the Connaught Presbytery. For many years the students looked on the Connaught Mission as *their own* in a very special sense, and this circumstance certainly helped to deepen the affectionate regard with which it was viewed throughout the Church. Dr. Edgar often referred to this feature of the work. In his well-known paper, entitled *Ireland's Mission Field*, read at the Dublin Conference of the Evangelical Alliance in August, 1852, he said:—"What renders the Presbyterian Mission in Connaught so peculiarly interesting is—not its Scriptural Schools, though they contain 2,000 Roman Catholic children; nor its industrial system, though the means of earning a livelihood have been furnished to very many; nor its teachers, readers, and Missionaries, though they command the admiration and love of all who know them—the delightful, joyous, and hopeful feature of this Mission is, that in its rise, progress, and prosperity, it is a STUDENTS' MISSION—cherished, supported, and raised to its present great prosperity by the young candidates for the Presbyterian Ministry."<sup>1</sup> This more immediate genesis of the

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<sup>1</sup> *Select Works*, p. 563, and *M. H.* (1852), p. 1054. For some years (I write in 1900) the Students' Missionary Association (Belfast and Derry) have been concentrating their efforts on the maintenance of the Fleming Stevenson Memorial College in Ahmedabad, India. No nobler object could possibly engage their sympathies. But it is cheering to know that they have not forgotten their first love. Nothing could be finer than the arrangement which the Rev. Thomas Lyle, my successor, has inaugurated, by which he secures the personal services of a number of Divinity Students for some months each year in Colportage work and the conducting of lantern and other kindred services. Whilst in a high degree valuable as a direct Missionary agency, this method is eminently fitted to foster in our Students and throughout the Church generally an intelligent and beneficent Christian patriotism.

movement was doubtless a potent factor in the promotion of a delightful sense of Christian brotherhood which was so marked a feature of the Mission. The glow of mutual affection and sympathy sweetened and elevated our entire work, so that I have never known one of our agents who did not afterwards look back with the most tender recollection to the days we spent together in the bogs of Connaught. This manifestation of brotherhood attracted the notice of many visitors. "It seemed to me," wrote Miss Pringle, of Edinburgh, after a visit to the field in 1849, "as if each of the young Missionaries in their respective localities cared for all, and all for each, as members of one household, in the true apostolic spirit."<sup>1</sup> Dr. Cooke bore similar testimony in the General Assembly, after a most helpful visit to the field (with Mr. D. K. Clarke) in 1850:—"I cannot sit down," he said, "without expressing my astonishment at the marvellous warm-heartedness of your Missionaries. I suppose it is because we meet so often here that we manifest so little warmth of feeling and so little hospitality one to another; and therefore it was to me most gratifying to see the Ministers, their wives, and elders, with eyes beaming with Christian love and generosity, and to feel the warm grasp of friendship from their hands. I really thought that when we grow cold with one another down here we ought to be sent now and then to be heated in Connaught."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *M. H.*, February, 1850, p. 768.

<sup>2</sup> *M. H.*, November, 1890, p. 276.

INTEREST IN SOME MEASURE WITHDRAWN FROM  
SIMILAR WORK ELSEWHERE.

The establishment of the Connaught Mission and the general attention it awakened helped to give a greatly increased impetus to the direct work of the Church among our Celtic fellow-countrymen. It was a matter of regret, however, that the interest taken in Connaught should in some measure have withdrawn attention from efforts of a similar kind which had been for some time conducted in Kerry, Galway, Birr (Parsonstown), and other widely-scattered localities. Work of the noblest kind was carried on in these different fields by such men as M'Manus, Crotty, Chestnut, E. M. Dill,<sup>1</sup> Irwin, Gass, and others like them. There has never been any Christian enterprise undertaken by our Church more worthy of admiration than the Mission in Birr, to the conduct of which the venerable Dr. Carlile brought at once the sagacity of a statesman and the devotion of an apostle. I question whether any work was ever done in any part of the Connaught field which, in practical wisdom, elevation of tone, and spiritual success, equalled that done in Birr. As to the kindred work carried on by devoted men in Kerry, the Rev. Thomas Witherow (afterwards Professor Witherow, D.D.), at the close of a visit of inspection to that district, wrote: "I trust I am not insensible to the grand and beautiful in nature; and yet I do most sincerely aver that the moral grandeur of the scene which the Callinafercy farm-school<sup>2</sup> presents to every

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<sup>1</sup>See Note K.

<sup>2</sup>The Callinafercy farm-school, carried on under the auspices of Miss Banks, a devoted Edinburgh lady, was a most interesting branch of the Kerry Mission.



visitor had far more charms for me than the picturesque Lakes of Killarney which sleep among the hills at a few miles distance. . . . I return from Munster with my impressions in favour of our Mission deepened and strengthened. It is my deliberate conviction that if conducted with energy, perseverance, and simple reliance on God, our Presbyterian Mission is the most efficient plan in existence for the spiritual enlightenment of this dark land."<sup>1</sup> And yet we find Dr. E. M. Dill, who was then in Kerry, constrained to declare that "the streams of Christian benevolence had, for the last three years, flowed almost exclusively towards Connaught."<sup>2</sup> A similar sense of disappointment must have been felt by the faithful men who laboured outside the limits of the more favoured Mission. The idea seems to have got abroad that the Irish Mission simply meant the Connaught Mission. I never at any time sympathized with this geographical restriction. It involved an injustice to many a devoted labourer; and it altogether misrepresented what was and must be the real sphere of our Irish work, which is not Connaught, but IRELAND, certainly not excluding Ulster.

#### PROTESTANTISM IN CONNAUGHT.

Independently of its results as regards the Celtic population, the Connaught Mission exercised a most salutary influence on the Protestantism, and more

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<sup>1</sup> *M. H.*, 1850, p. 871.

<sup>2</sup> *M. H.*, January, 1850, p. 751, Dr. Dill's scathing arraignment of Romanism: *The Mystery Solved: or, Ireland's Miseries; The Grand Cause and Cure*, was published while he was in Kerry.

especially the Presbyterianism, of the Western Province. The reflection is a very saddening one that in evil days, now happily gone, wholesale perversions to Romanism of Protestant families, and even of Protestant colonies, took place throughout the entire South and West of the country. These perversions were not restricted to any particular section of Protestants. The Papacy has never had in its service more passionately devoted adherents than the descendants of Cromwell's troopers in Tipperary, Kerry, Galway, and other Irish counties; and that the sons and daughters of the old Scottish Covenant contributed their share to the great defection is placed beyond all doubt by the unequivocal and oft-repeated testimony of Ministers and delegates of our own. Owing to a variety of causes the Western Province was specially exposed to the evil of which I am speaking. It is of Connaught that Dr. Edgar writes:—"Protestantism has withered under the deadly shade of Rome, and men whose forefathers Blair and Usher taught, by living among her adherents, have learned their ways."<sup>1</sup> Even so late as 1890, we find one of the Assembly's deputies<sup>2</sup> to Connaught making the startling statement: "I was standing once with one of our Ministers on an eminence in County Mayo, overlooking a wide tract of country. Pointing to various houses, he said to me, 'In these houses live Grahams, Cunninghams, Scotts, Murrays, and Gillespies. These are the descendants of Scotch Presbyterian settlers. Their forefathers

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<sup>1</sup> *M. H.*, August, 1852, p. 1055.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. F. S. Gardiner, then of Coleraine.

were Presbyterians. These people are now all Romanists.'"<sup>1</sup>

In the presence of well-authenticated facts like these it is impossible for us as a Church to claim immunity from blame. It must, however, in all fairness be borne in mind that during the long years in which most of these lamentable defections took place, Presbyterianism in its Ulster home was labouring under the most grievous disabilities. Pursued by intolerant and unceasing persecution—civil, ecclesiastical, social, educational—it had to maintain a life-and-death struggle for its very existence in the province which it had so largely helped to ameliorate. For upwards of one hundred and fifty years many thousands of its adherents—oftentimes the choicest spirits in its entire membership—were annually forced to cross the Atlantic in the hope of founding homes for themselves and their children amid more propitious surroundings. It was hardly to be expected that the Ulster Church, in such circumstances, could maintain effective Missions among its scattered co-religionists in the other Provinces. Owing to the growth of doctrinal indifference among the Ministers and members of the Synod of Ulster, the 18th century proved to be the dreariest in our entire history. The Missionary energies of the Church were paralysed; and there is too abundant evidence that many of the perversions that we deplore took place during that unhappy period.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *M. H.*, 1890, p. 87.

<sup>2</sup> See Note L. Speaking on the subject of perversions in Connemara, Mr. M'Manus makes the suggestive remark: "An untaught Protestant lapses to Rome, but an untaught Romanist does not lapse to Protestantism."—*Sketches*, p. 68.

Besides the Presbyterian settlers there were dispersed throughout the country large numbers of Protestant Nonconformists, who had come, for the most part, from England. The spiritual oversight of these settlers devolved in a very special degree on the then Established Church of Ireland. Her parish system gave her incomparable advantages for the discharge of this great obligation. In many cases the State clergy might be said to have had in their parishes no Protestants at all except these immigrants. The Established Church of those days, however, was, with some honourable exceptions, notoriously inefficient; and as a consequence Protestantism over entire counties was practically wiped out. The Independents and Baptists rendered important service; and it would be wrong not to make special mention of the splendid work done in later years among the unshepherded people by John Wesley<sup>1</sup> and his early band of devoted followers. In many a dark corner of the land they kindled the torch of an earnest Gospel testimony. "The hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord."

As far as Western Presbyterianism was concerned, the most effectual help it ever received came through the establishment of the "Connaught Mission." By the formation of new Congregations and Mission Stations many additional centres of influence were created; and without any disparagement of our predecessors, who had exercised their ministry under wholly different conditions, the increase of the Mission staff, and the warm sympathy

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<sup>1</sup> 1747 and onwards.

of Christian friends in Ireland, Scotland, and elsewhere, brought to our hitherto isolated people there a new spirit of hopefulness and courage. Though the Mission was inaugurated with special reference to our fellow-countrymen of a different faith, its agents, it need hardly be said, made it a primary object everywhere to look after the scattered members of our own communion. In his annual report to the Assembly in 1864, Dr. Edgar was able to state that in Connaught fourteen churches and fourteen manses had been erected within recent years.<sup>1</sup> There are probably no congregations in Ireland more firm in their attachment to our Church than those under the care of the Connaught Presbytery; and the remark is equally applicable to all the congregations situated in the more Missionary districts of the country.

WE UNDERSTAND OUR COUNTRYMEN BETTER.

I should have liked to notice some other topics before closing this chapter, but I must confine myself to one additional point. For us, the English schools had this great advantage over the Irish, that they brought us into easier and closer contact with the people. We thus came to understand them better—their many estimable qualities; their characteristic failings (they at the same time, doubtless, coming more clearly to perceive ours); their religion, what it was *to them* as a potent influence moulding their character and their daily

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<sup>1</sup> This result was owing mainly to the enthusiastic efforts of Dr. Edgar himself.

life; their peculiar difficulties; their strong prejudices; their undoubted grievances. It is well known that Dr. Edgar was profoundly disappointed at the ingratitude shown by the Irish people towards those who had so nobly come to their rescue in the hour of their dire extremity. In his first public letter from Mullafary Manse the good Doctor had written—"Where in all the world shall we find a more generous, more affectionate, more social, more truly polite, faithful, grateful people than such of the native Irish as are to be found in the mountain fastnesses of Connaught?"<sup>1</sup> A few weeks later he repeats the same sentiment in *The Cry from Connaught*—"Earth does not furnish more suitable subjects to be won by kindness than the poor people with whom I have been. They are generous and polite, hospitable and kind, and full of gratitude for the smallest favour."<sup>2</sup> Within less than eighteen months we find the same graphic pen recording a very different verdict.<sup>3</sup> "Popery," he writes, "always anti-Christian, appeared doubly so in the depths of wretchedness. Her Irish votaries, debtors to all the world, are ungrateful to all the world; and while fed and clothed, rise in rebellion and murderous violence."<sup>4</sup> . . . The world is filled with disgust: let us be filled with Christian pity and

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<sup>1</sup> *Memoir*, p. 207.

<sup>2</sup> *M. H.*, Nov., 1846, p. 379.

<sup>3</sup> Smith O'Brien's "rising" had developed in the meantime.

<sup>4</sup> Dr. Edgar carefully excluded the members of our Mission from all complicity with crime.

Christian love; and, however black the darkness and deep the degradation, let none give way to despair.”<sup>1</sup> I am persuaded that had Dr. Edgar lived for some years among these struggling people, going in and out among them in familiar daily intercourse, his great, generous heart would have prompted a somewhat qualified utterance. Consider the circumstances. The “Young Ireland” movement, begun several years before, came to a head in 1848. No man brought a fiercer spirit into that agitation than John Mitchell, the Ulster (Unitarian) Presbyterian. His newspaper, *The United Irishman*, helped beyond any other agency to rouse large numbers of the peasantry, especially the younger men, to frenzy. He and his colleagues, however they felt with regard to the private benefactions which were poured from all quarters into the country, were by no means mollified by what appeared to them the reluctant charities of the English Government. Their position, boldly asserted, was that England was responsible for the Famine, as it was owing to her cruel mismanagement of Irish affairs—especially, although not exclusively, in the matter of land—that such a visitation became possible. It was, therefore, in accordance with the teaching of their political and probably also their religious leaders that Irish juries, at inquests held in various places on those who had died of want, or sickness resulting from want, returned a verdict of “wilful murder” against

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<sup>1</sup> *M. H.*, April, 1848, pp. 537-8. See Note M.

Lord John Russell, the then Prime Minister of England.

This must naturally have appeared incurably wicked to those especially who in these terrible times had multiplied every sort of kindness they could bring to bear on the famishing population. *But the law of Christ requires that we put ourselves as far as possible in the people's place, and look at the matter from their standpoint.* If we are not able to comply with this elementary Christian requirement, the Irish problem in its deeper issues is sealed from our vision. The stricken peasantry, still hovering with their families on the verge of ruin, and knowing, as they did, that British Governments had again and again resisted every effort to ameliorate the condition of the tenantry, found it easy to respond to the impassioned appeals of their leaders. No one has a stronger conviction than I have of the deteriorating influence of Romanism on the social life of communities whom it is strong enough to control; but I do not think it fair to refer all the social evils of Ireland to Romanism. Even when, following the common method, you put Religion and Race together, you have not found an exhaustive or even a candid explanation. England had a share, and a large share, in the huge responsibility. She instituted and for generations persistently maintained a condition of the social fabric (I refer particularly to the land system) which made a national catastrophe like the Famine to be not only possible, but sooner or later inevitable. Only a shallow or churlish Protestantism would hesitate to acknowledge a fact



so well authenticated as this is.<sup>1</sup> Some of my readers may deem it only mischievous to recall such memories, now that we live in an age of kindly sympathy and beneficent legislation. Thank God, we do, though after a long and gruesome struggle. But the true penitent, whether an individual or a nation, will always remember and acknowledge his sins even after God has forgotten them.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Even very pronounced Protestants have complained that in Dr. E. M. Dill's well-known book, *Ireland's Miseries: their Cause and Cure*, he seems to attribute all the ills of Ireland to Romanism. It is indeed his special object to demonstrate that the dominant religion of the people is "the *grand* cause" of our national misfortune, as the Gospel must be "the *grand* cure." But the writer was too well informed and too impartial not to refer to the contributing influences. "We believe," he says, "that the tenant's wretchedness is mainly chargeable on the landlord, or *rather* the wretched system of landlordism in Ireland; and that of all the secondary and derivative causes of our miseries that is the chief" (p. 64). Most persons acquainted with Ireland will subscribe to the distinction Dr. Dill makes between "the landlord" and the "wretched system of landlordism." There were many kind and considerate landlords who, heartily supported by their families, lived to do good to their tenantry; but "the system" of Irish landlordism (if it were possible to call it a system) permitted, if it did not encourage, every form of grinding tyranny.

<sup>2</sup> One of the most hopeful features of the present situation is to be found in the fact that England's unsympathetic treatment of Ireland in the past is now publicly acknowledged by our foremost historians and statesmen of all the great political parties. It is an encouraging indication of the growth of a juster and kindlier temper that no one has contributed so powerfully to bring about this state of affairs as Mr. W. E. H. Lecky, Unionist M.P. for Dublin University—certainly the most Conservative constituency in Ireland.

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE DUBLIN MISSION.

#### FIRST BEGINNINGS.

THE first movement towards the establishment of a branch of the Irish Mission in Dublin was made in Dublin itself. At the Annual Meeting of the General Assembly, held in Armagh, in 1852, a memorial was read from the Congregations of Ormond Quay, Gloucester Street, Mary's Abbey, and Adelaide Road, expressing lively interest in the Missionary schemes of the Church, especially in that to our countrymen at home; and praying the Assembly to deliberate on the best means of establishing a special Mission with this object in the Metropolis. The consideration of the subject was held over till the following year; but, in the meantime, the friends in Dublin were encouraged to continue and extend the work they had so well inaugurated.<sup>1</sup> In 1853 the Assembly resolved to establish a Mission in Dublin as "an integral portion of the general Mission to the Roman Catholics of this country; and that to carry this resolution into efficient operation, a Minister, with a suitable staff of Scripture-readers, be appointed by the Directory."<sup>2</sup> In the carrying out of this instruction, the Mission Board appointed the Rev. Dr. Kirkpatrick, of Dublin, to visit Connaught, in the

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<sup>1</sup> *Assembly's Minutes*, 1852, pp. 125, 126.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 1853, p. 204.

hope that a suitable selection might be made from among the Missionaries labouring in that Province. My brethren in Connaught did me the honour of suggesting my name, and I was asked by Dr. Kirkpatrick to accept the appointment. I had good reason to know the altogether exceptional difficulties and discouragements attendant on such a work, and the almost invincible incredulity of many good people in regard to it—an incredulity which not seldom went so far as even to question the integrity of the agents who allowed themselves to be identified with it. The sphere of the contemplated Mission was of pre-eminent importance, constituting, as it did, one of the strongest fortresses of aggressive Missionary Romanism to be found in almost any part of the world. No previous efforts of our Church afforded any precedent to guide one in the conduct of such an enterprise, our agencies in this department having hitherto been mainly confined to comparatively secluded rural districts. Besides these considerations, I was afraid that my strength—never very robust—would be unequal to the strain of such an undertaking. It will not be thought strange, therefore, that I thought it right to decline the proffered invitation. Many of my brethren, however, seemed to think that I was wrong. Acting on their advice, Dr. Kirkpatrick renewed the request, and I finally decided to yield. I must say that, in arriving at this conclusion, the most determining factor was the conviction which a residence of five and a half years in Connaught had lodged in my mind—that if the Presbyterian Church was in earnest in

attempting a national Mission to our countrymen at all, Dublin must of necessity be the centre of her activities. I had already decided in my own mind to devote my life to the Irish Mission should the Church accept the offering; and I therefore bade farewell to my beloved work in Mullafary on an early day of February, 1854, and reached what proved to be the sphere of my future life-work on the following evening.

At the time of my arrival in Dublin, controversy with Rome was in the air. Discussion classes had for two or three years been carried on in various districts of the city in connection with the Society for Irish Church Missions; and only a few months before a central Mission had been started in Townsend Street. The Superintendent of the work in Dublin was the Rev. (afterwards Dr.) Charles F. MacCarthy—a most genial, able, and scholarly clergyman, and the very incarnation of good-natured controversy. He had drunk deeply into the spirit of the Rev. Alexander Dallas, founder of the Irish Church Missions, who organized the entire work of that important Society on the basis of open controversial aggression. I remember how strange it seemed to me to see the walls of a great Roman Catholic city like Dublin covered with placards announcing as the subject of discussion at some forthcoming meeting: “Can a Roman Catholic be a Christian?” and offering £100, or perhaps more, to any one, priest or layman, who could establish the affirmative to the satisfaction of the chairman. I was at an early period introduced to Dr. MacCarthy. He gave me some most valuable

hints, and always proved himself most sympathetic and friendly.

PUBLIC CONTROVERSY.

The Congregation of Mary's Abbey took a very practical interest in carrying out the recommendation of the Assembly already referred to. In the beginning of 1853, the Session engaged a Scripture-reader to visit among the Roman Catholics of the neighbourhood, and a few earnest laymen belonging to the congregation started a meeting for public discussion, which was held every week in the Lecture Hall of the Church. I have no doubt that this controversial meeting was suggested by the Irish Church Mission Debating Classes, which were then attracting considerable attention in the City. I was requested to take the oversight of the Mary's Abbey class, and this circumstance may be said to have formally initiated the Assembly's Mission in Dublin. In many respects this weekly meeting was a most remarkable one. There were usually from 100 to 200 persons present—fully one half of whom were Roman Catholics. There was an entrance from Capel Street, and another (in the rear) from Mary's Abbey Lane. The Protestant section of the audience generally came by the Capel Street entrance, and owing to the position of the platform ranged themselves on my left; while the Roman Catholics, entering by the Mary's Abbey door, marshalled themselves on my right. The subjects of debate were of course announced beforehand. I always introduced the topic of the evening in a short address, in which, as clearly as I could, I

stated the Protestant position. Under the general regulations of the meeting full opportunity of reply was then afforded to all and sundry. For a considerable time, notwithstanding the opposition of the clergy, not less than five or six debaters on the Roman Catholic side presented themselves each evening. They had thoroughly studied the subject in their controversial manuals; and their own ingenuity supplied arguments not to be found in any manual or treatise that ever was written. They nearly all exhibited the characteristic acuteness and readiness of the genuine Celt. Some were dialectic, and pressed home what they regarded as the strong points of the Roman argument; some were oratorical, and sought to carry the meeting by storm; some evinced a historical bent; while others could not refrain from an occasional political innuendo. When one disputant was disposed of another started up to maintain the contest on his own favourite lines. No matter what the proclivities of the speaker or the nature of the topic under discussion, they all, if they felt themselves hard pressed, took shelter, as their final resort, in what they claimed to be the Divine Voice of the Church.<sup>1</sup> Shoemakers were much in evidence, and the part they took in the discussions showed clearly that their occupation was by no means incompatible with the study of polemical theology. An ex-priest, a thoroughly educated man, who knew the controversy well, especially the favourite "catch-points," was seldom absent, and could ply the usual Roman Catholic arguments with great skill

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<sup>1</sup> See Note N.

and plausibility. I endeavoured to meet these consecutive opponents as I best could, and I trust the cause of Biblical truth did not altogether suffer in my hands, though I always felt that I had no great reason for boastfulness. In the management of the meeting I always sought to be scrupulously fair; and this was frankly acknowledged by the disputants themselves. I need hardly say that I made it my great aim on every occasion to state and urge a distinctively Gospel message. The discussions were conducted with good temper; and I was often astonished at the respect and real courtesy with which I was almost invariably treated. Though there was often a considerable amount of repressed excitement, I do not remember that any hostile feeling was ever exhibited on either side; which was all the more remarkable, as the sexton—a most determined man, with a considerable infusion of “true blue” Protestant blood in his constitution—was accustomed, when the conflict was manifestly approaching a crisis, to push his way ominously across the room with a long iron rod in his hand, which was said to have some occult connection with the lighting of the premises, but in the peculiar circumstances was certainly suggestive of a very different application.

These meetings were maintained for some winters,<sup>1</sup> and the ordinary round of controverted subjects was discussed again and again. When, however, in the third or fourth year, I found myself going over the same beaten track with almost the

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<sup>1</sup> They were frequently reported at considerable length in *The Warder*—a weekly Protestant newspaper.

very same parties,<sup>1</sup> I rebelled against the occupation. It was not for hack discussion like this that I had given myself to the Christian Ministry. It was not helpful to my own religious life ; and, as far as I could ascertain, it did not seem to be authenticated by any encouraging spiritual results. There were, I am persuaded, not a few in the audience, Roman Catholic as well as Protestant, who got benefit : I never could discern much indication, however, that any really spiritual impression had been made upon the gladiators of debate themselves. As far as they were concerned, it was not much more than a reproduction of Donnybrook on a new stage. While the meetings continued, they involved on my part a more thorough study of Roman Catholic controversy than I should probably have considered necessary, and they so far helped to qualify me for other departments of work afterwards undertaken in connection with the Mission. I found it essential that I should study the doctrinal system of Rome *as expounded by her own accredited authorities*. Protestant books dealing with the subject seemed for the most part to look at Romanism merely *from the outside*. This was specially observable in the case of some of the Manuals of Controversy then in extensive use. Their authors did not appear to have themselves apprehended the real *inwardness* of the Roman Catholic doctrines they were assailing. They had apparently surveyed the questions at issue only from a distance, and their representations were conse-

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<sup>1</sup> Owing, I believe, to the persistent opposition of the Ecclesiastical authorities, the number of the Roman Catholic debaters gradually diminished.



quently one-sided and incomplete. This method may suffice for such as are content with a superficial acquaintance with the Roman theology; but those (and I refer specially to religious teachers) who wish thoroughly to comprehend this strange compound of vital truth and dangerous error, and the secret of the mysterious grasp with which it has for long ages held the intellect, conscience, and heart of untold millions of votaries, must get beyond the Protestant manuals, and indeed Protestant treatises generally, and study the subject as it is portrayed by duly authorized theologians of the Roman Church itself.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>In connection with the Controversial Class, the following were very much in use:—(*On the Roman Catholic side*)—*Butler's* (or it is now called, *The Maynooth*) *Catechism*; *Doyle's Abridgement of Christian Doctrine*; *Challoner's Catholic Christian Instructed*. For thorough knowledge of the system, it is essential to study the *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, and the *Catechism of Trent* (*Roman Catechism*)—a Roman Catholic translation is much to be preferred; the *Tridentine Canons and Decrees*, translated by Waterworth; the *Catechism* by Donovan. (*On the Protestant side*)—*Bagot's Protestant Catechism*; *Blakeney's Manual*; (*Cunningham's*) *Stillingfleet*; *Elliott's Delineation of Romanism*. In recent years many valuable summaries have been published. It is always advisable to give the preference to volumes that deal with principles rather than details.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE DUBLIN MISSION—THE LOCAL WORK.

#### FORMATION OF A MISSION CHURCH.

IN determining to establish a Mission in Dublin, the General Assembly had a local work mainly in view. To this local work I almost wholly confined myself during the earlier years of my residence in Dublin. I need not enter into minute details regarding it, as it was in many respects similar to that of City Missions everywhere. I confine myself in these chapters to subjects bearing directly on what is known as "Irish Mission" work.

I have referred to the Weekly Controversial Class which I found ready to my hand when I arrived in Dublin. From the very first, however, more direct spiritual work was organized. A Weekly Sabbath Evening Evangelistic Service, Sabbath and Day Schools, Cottage Meetings, a Conversational Bible Class, a Christian-Fellowship Meeting,<sup>1</sup> and other kindred agencies were almost immediately established, and met with great encouragement. A most interesting class of young men met with me once a week for the careful study of the Roman Controversy, some of the better known Roman Catholic Catechisms and Manuals being used as text-books. These young men in

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<sup>1</sup> The most helpful persons connected with this meeting had been members of Dr. Carlile's Mission Congregation in Birr (Parsonstown). They had originally been Roman Catholics.

various ways turned their knowledge to good account. They also formed themselves into a Voluntary Visiting Agency, in more immediate connection with the Sabbath Evening Service. During the earlier years of the Mission we employed, in addition, four Visiting Agents,<sup>1</sup> whose time was wholly given to the work. In the respective districts assigned to them they were required to pay very special attention to nominally Presbyterian families who had fallen out of Church connection, and were not known to any of our ministers. A large number of these were found, who in various ways—not infrequently by inter-marriage—had been brought under Romanizing influences. We regarded these, our nominal co-religionists, as having a first claim on our consideration; and they were often most helpful in securing us access to their Roman Catholic relatives and acquaintances. Some of our visiting agents were qualified in a quite exceptional way for their work. They possessed the key to the Irish heart—the key of genuine tender Christian sympathy. One of these agents out-distanced all his fellows in this respect.<sup>2</sup> As a devoted messenger of Christ, he literally besought the people with tears. He died in one of the city hospitals of fever, caught in the discharge of his duties, and the crowd of weeping mourners, most of them Roman Catholics, who followed his remains

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<sup>1</sup> Partly supported by the Board of Missions, and partly by friends in Dublin.

<sup>2</sup> William John M'Dowell, who joined our Mission from the congregation of Townsend Street, Belfast.

through the streets of the city to Mount Jerome Cemetery has been to me a sacred memory and stimulus ever since.

The controversial meetings were not wholly discontinued, but they were relegated to a subordinate place. All the agents joined me in the effort to carry on the work on more spiritual lines. Through our various agencies, a considerable number of persons,<sup>1</sup> Protestant and Roman Catholic, including families of "mixed marriages," were brought under the influence of the Mission, and as time went on they naturally sought for full Gospel ordinances.<sup>2</sup> For this purpose I urged them to connect themselves with some of our existing Presbyterian congregations; but this arrangement did not, and indeed could not, continue to work satisfactorily. This was especially true of those who had been previously connected with the Church of Rome. The Ministers of the ordinary congregations, however anxious to befriend them, could not possibly have an intimate knowledge of their history or understand the peculiar struggles through which they had passed. The arrangement, besides, laid a continuous arrest on the development and progress of the Mission. I therefore felt constrained, in a statement submitted to the Board of Missionary

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<sup>1</sup> The majority of these were Presbyterians from Scotland and the North of Ireland. There was at the time, and I am sure there is still, a considerable number of these in the city, who lie wholly outside our Church organizations. They require most special attention.

<sup>2</sup> We had in the meantime secured accommodation in a commodious schoolhouse in King's Inn Street.

Directors in September, 1857, to bear the following testimony:—"I shall only express it as my conviction, derived from the experience of several years, that it is impossible to regard our Mission as even *established* in Dublin, until it is organized on the principle of a MISSION CHURCH. Of course I refer to such a Church as would be, and continue to be, a component part of the 'Irish Mission.'" As this was the principle on which all the Missions of the Church were conducted in every part of the world, the Board accepted the suggestion; and accordingly, from April, 1858, all our agencies were grafted on a self-contained Mission Church, with full Gospel ordinances.

As soon as our work was organized on this basis, it at once reached a platform of greatly increased efficiency, especially on its spiritual side. A most interesting work was carried on among Roman Catholics and Protestants alike. I observe that Mr. Dallas speaks of the establishment of the Mission Church in Dublin in connection with the Irish Church Missions, as the founding of a "Convert Church."<sup>1</sup> We never adopted that designation, and we never thought of confining our efforts to Roman Catholics, any more than Peter or Paul, though charged with special Missions, restricted their Apostolic message to the Jews on the one hand, or the Gentiles on the other. For a variety of reasons we regarded it as most desirable that there should be a nucleus of Protestant Christians at the heart of the movement. It was necessary, however, that some indication should be given of the special nature

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<sup>1</sup> *Story of the Irish Church Missions*, p. 122.

of the work, and we therefore employed the designation "Mission Church."<sup>1</sup> In August, 1861, *fifty-nine* persons sat down at the Lord's Table, representing a Communion roll of *seventy*.<sup>2</sup> Of these *fifty-nine* communicants, *eleven* had belonged to the Church of Rome, and *six* others were the wives, husbands, &c., of such. A similar proportion was maintained in after years. There was an average attendance of 120 children in our Daily Schools. Weekly Controversial Meetings were held occasionally, and Public Lectures<sup>3</sup> were delivered as circumstances seemed to require. Besides the families who claimed connection with us, many others were systematically visited by our agents. The premises in King's Inn Street became too small for our accommodation, and in July, 1860, the members of the Mission Congregation forwarded, of their own accord, a memorial to the Board of Directors, praying for increased accommodation. They described themselves as "having been gathered from among the outlying population of the city," and as having, many of them, "been educated within the pale of the Church of Rome." This memorial was signed by

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<sup>1</sup> See Note O.

<sup>2</sup> These numbers will appear very small to those who are conversant with Mission work in Protestant cities; but the special character of the Mission, carried on as it was in the heart of the Irish Metropolis, must be taken into account.

<sup>3</sup> In addition to those delivered in King's Inn Street, a series by leading Ministers of the General Assembly was given in the Rotunda, and another series in the Metropolitan Hall. These courses of Public Lectures were very largely attended. The Metropolitan Hall Lectures were subsequently published.

upwards of one hundred adults, scarcely one of whom had been previously connected with any of our congregations. One-fourth of them had been Roman Catholics, or were connected by family ties with Roman Catholics. A new Mission building was accordingly erected in Jervis Street, and was opened for public worship, in August, 1865, by the late Rev. Dugald MacColl, of the Wynd Church, Glasgow. The interest manifested in the erection of this building over the entire Church was most encouraging. Almost the entire sum required (£2,100) having been voluntarily forwarded by the contributors.

The same kind of work which has already been described as carried on in King's Inn Street was continued in Jervis Street. Instead of a number of Scripture-readers, a Licentiate was associated with me in the conduct of the Mission—a change which was rendered necessary by the growth of the *general*, as distinguished from the *local*, side of the Mission. Though in some respects much more helpful to myself personally, this arrangement was not so conducive to direct aggressive effort among the Roman Catholic population. As will be readily understood, suitable lay agents of tact and experience, specially trained for the work, will make way in many cases where it is too much to expect that a Minister, known to be such, will find welcome entrance. The congregation increased considerably in Jervis Street, and we were greatly helped in various branches of the work by the generous co-operation of Christian friends belonging to other congregations. I recall with devout thank-

fulness many sacred incidents which mark these long years of Missionary labour. I need not say that our enterprise was one of very exceptional difficulty; but if our faith was tested on the one hand by many acute disappointments, we were reassured on the other hand by ever-recurring tokens of spiritual blessing. We were often favoured with special "times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord;"<sup>1</sup> and not a few, Roman Catholics by birth as well as Protestants, were brought to rejoice in the great salvation.<sup>2</sup> We had many memorable Communion seasons; and I think it worthy of notice that the Scriptural mode, Divine in its very simplicity, in which the sacred ordinance is administered in our Presbyterian Church, always made a profound impression on those who had been accustomed to the pompous parade of the Roman ritual. The joyful, and in many instances triumphant, death-beds of many of our members who had originally belonged to the Church of Rome made a great impression on their neighbours. And not a few survivors scattered throughout various parts of the world continue in their different spheres to be "living epistles of Christ, known and read of all men."

The importance of Dublin as a central station for Irish Mission work was attested by the fact that our "converts" were drawn from all parts of the country. In addition to those who were the direct

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<sup>1</sup> We all felt that this was especially true of our work in King's Inn Street.

<sup>2</sup> An almost identical experience is recorded by Dr. Carlile regarding the Mission in Birr. *M. H.*, March, 1854.



fruit of our local work, we had always a good representation from the Connaught field. One very intelligent fellow, hailing from Mayo, and who was altogether unconnected with our Mission there, was first arrested by a pamphlet on "The True Church of Christ," which had been issued in connection with our Dublin Mission Press, and which was lent him by a comrade. In passing through some of our classes I was astonished to find that, mainly through his own thought and reading, he had come thoroughly to understand and accept the spiritual conception of the Church, and with it the whole circle of evangelical Protestant truth. We almost always had some interesting young people who had been brought up in the Connaught Schools or Orphanage. During the earlier years of our Dublin work we were privileged to reckon among our members several who had come to us from Birr (Parsonstown), the fruit of Dr. Carlile's remarkable labours in that place; and there were no persons connected with our Mission Church who were more deeply versed than they in the Word of God. Ulster also contributed its share. One of the most earnest of our young men had been brought into the light of Gospel truth in 1859—the great Revival year—while attending Mass in the Roman Catholic chapel. He proved himself ever afterwards to be a devoted follower of Christ. We had members also from Munster, not the least remarkable of them being an accomplished Celtic scholar who was led to accept the Gospel in its fulness while assisting in the translation of Bedell's Bible into Munster Irish.

## NEW ARRANGEMENTS REGARDING THE LOCAL WORK.

An important change was made in the Mission in 1878. The General Assembly resolved "That the Rev. H. Magee be freed from charge of the congregation in Jervis Street, with the view of devoting himself to the work of the Mission Press, the training and superintendence of Colporteurs, and the occasional visitation of Presbyteries and congregations, for the purpose of giving information and of stirring up in our own and in other Churches an increased interest in the progress and prospects of our 'Home Mission.'" The Assembly further resolved:—"That the Mission Board be empowered to select, with a view to ordination, a suitable Missionary Pastor in Jervis Street, who shall have the oversight of the congregation and of the agencies connected with it." *From this time my responsibility for the conduct of the local work practically ceased.*

The Rev. William Moore, M.A. (afterwards the well-known Dr. Moore of Puerto Sta. Maria, Spain) was inducted in April, 1879, as Missionary Pastor of Jervis Street. In his time the Mission was removed to Great Brunswick Street.<sup>1</sup> On his acceptance of a call from the congregation of Lower Gloucester Street, Dublin, I offered to resume for a time the oversight of the Mission congregation and its allied agencies, but the strain involved in the working of both departments proved to be too great for my health. Accordingly in October, 1886, Mr. Alexander Hall, B.A., an earnest Licentiate

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<sup>1</sup> See Note P.

who had been for some time labouring in the West of Ireland, was ordained to the superintendence of the local work. He remained in charge till January, 1889, when he accepted a call from the congregation of Drogheda. Shortly afterwards the Board of Missionary Directors decided to "appoint, in the meantime, a layman of Missionary gifts and experience to take charge, under the superintendence of the Presbytery of Dublin, of the Mission Church in Great Brunswick Street, on the understanding that the Presbytery of Dublin will be responsible for the administration of all Christian ordinances at suitable times in connection with the Church." As I write, the Mission is being vigorously wrought under this arrangement by a Student Missionary. An additional Mission centre has been occupied, and placed under the care of another Student Missionary, and in both stations invaluable help is being given by a large number of willing workers belonging to the different City congregations.

#### CONNAUGHT AND DUBLIN—A COMPARISON.

Were I asked to state in what respects Connaught and Dublin seemed to differ as spheres of Irish Mission work, I should be disposed to say that at no time did our work in Dublin present so many features of exceptional interest as characterized the Connaught Mission during the period when I knew it best. On the other hand there was wider access in Dublin than in Connaught for suitable agents employed in house to house visitation; there was in the City a bolder spirit of inquiry—which I may

mention has greatly increased in recent years ; there was much less to be feared from priestly opposition ; there was a much larger proportion of " mixed marriages," *i.e.*, between Roman Catholics and Protestants—presenting cases which not only required, but in many instances most favourably invited, missionary attention. It was possible in various ways—by public lectures, by sermons, by the judicious use of the Press, etc—to reach a class of persons much better educated than the peasantry of the West, and in every way socially their superiors. There was a larger amount of voluntary Christian help available in Dublin ; and after our work was constituted on a *church* basis, it possessed a character of continuity and permanence that is quite exceptional in the more country districts. It is to be remembered that I am now speaking of " Irish Mission " work as such.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE DUBLIN MISSION.—THE GENERAL WORK.

#### I.—THE MISSION PRESS.

I HAVE tried in the preceding chapter briefly to indicate what I have called the local agencies of the Dublin Mission. The more general agencies—*i.e.*, those bearing on the country at large—call for a somewhat more lengthened notice.

#### IRISH MISSION WORK—DUBLIN ITS NECESSARY CENTRE.

As has been previously said, the sphere of our Irish Mission is Ireland—the whole of Ireland. To this wide Missionary field there is and can be only one centre. An influence can be wielded from Dublin on the Celtic population of the country, incomparably greater than from any other place that can be named. In the *Missionary Herald* for March, 1848, we find Dr. Carlile making an earnest appeal for the establishment of a great central Missionary Institute in Parsonstown. That a proposal should have been seriously submitted on such high authority to make the comparatively small town of Birr the centre of our entire Irish Mission seems to us nowadays almost incredible: but it at least shows how greatly this distinguished man felt encouraged by the progress of his work in that locality, and what strong confidence he cherished as to its future. The country has so altered since in almost every respect that I cannot

but think that were Dr. Carlile now with us he would be among the very first to maintain that there can be no permanent centre for our Irish work except the Metropolis. It alone commands the country—the more Celtic Provinces especially. The people naturally and inevitably look to it as the centre and focus of all great national movements. I carried this conviction with me to Dublin when I first entered on the work there; and after the experience of all the intervening years the conviction is much stronger than before. Irresistible changes—educational, social, political, economic—have virtually swept away some most promising Missions formerly conducted by our Church<sup>1</sup> in secluded rural districts and even in important Provincial towns. Dublin on the other hand, whether as a sphere of local work or a centre of Missionary influence to the whole land, retains all its previous claims to wholly exceptional consideration. In both respects, indeed, as could be easily shown, its importance has greatly grown with the onward march of the years.

#### THE MISSION PRESS—EARLY EFFORTS.

In times within my own memory the Press was frequently and ably made use of by such Missionaries as Messrs. Joseph Fisher, of Galway; Henry McManus, William Crotty<sup>2</sup> (ex-priest), Dr. James

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<sup>1</sup> This statement is equally true of Missions carried on under the auspices of other Churches.

<sup>2</sup> A number of Mr. Crotty's papers, which were published as tracts, appeared in early numbers of the *Missionary Herald*.

Carlile, Dr. Edward M. Dill, William Irwin, and others. Dr. Carlile made considerable use of the Press in Parsonstown.<sup>1</sup> I have no doubt that other Missionaries did the same in other districts. In connection with the Connaught Mission, Messrs. Thomas Y. Killen, John Hall (he wrote weekly for the Boyle paper), and, more especially, Rev. Thomas Armstrong, made effective use of such of the local newspapers as were available. The Rev. Robert Allen was a great believer in the importance of the Press as a Missionary agency; and his contributions to the local journals, always judicious, courteous, and persuasive, were a marked feature of his work in the West.

“THE CATHOLIC LAYMAN.”

As far as I am aware, the most notable attempt to use the Press *systematically* as a direct instrument of Irish evangelization was made by the promoters of *The Catholic Layman*.<sup>2</sup> No more admirable effort in this special department was ever undertaken in Ireland. The first number was issued in January, 1852, and the Magazine was maintained as a monthly serial for seven years, ending December, 1858. It was edited by the late Arthur Edward Gayer, Esq., Q.C., LL.D., who was ably assisted, it is understood, by Fellows and Professors of Trinity College, and other accomplished scholars. The articles may almost be said to have been written in

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<sup>1</sup> I have not been able to find more than one or two of the tracts and pamphlets he published.

<sup>2</sup> Dublin : William Curry & Co.

the College Library. Mr. John Henderson, of Park, Glasgow, is said to have relieved the conductors from the burden of financial responsibility. *The Catholic Layman* was mainly addressed to the better educated class of Roman Catholics, and it had a large free postal circulation amongst the dignitaries, priests, and leading laymen of the Roman Catholic Church. The publication was a model not only of accuracy and thoroughness, but —what was of equal importance—of Christian courtesy and transparent fairness of discussion. No unworthy personality was ever allowed to sully its pages. The controversy with Rome was carried on from what is known as the Low Church or Evangelical standpoint. So great an advance in the direction of High Church views has since taken place among the Theological Professors and other leading members of the Irish Episcopal Church, that it is not too much to assert that such a serial, under such auspices, could not possibly be produced now. But *The Catholic Layman*, while it lasted, was an honour to the then Established Church of Ireland; and it remains, and will continue to remain, an honour to our common Protestantism. Those who are the fortunate owners of the seven volumes,<sup>1</sup> with the Supplement containing Index and Analytical Digest, are in possession of a veritable *thesaurus* of perfectly reliable information on this great and ever-urgent theme.

“PLAIN WORDS.”—“THE CHRISTIAN IRISHMAN.”

Eighteen Hundred and Fifty-nine, the year of the

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<sup>1</sup> *The Catholic Layman* is now, I believe, out of print; but sets are sometimes to be had in the old book-shops.



Great Revival, originated many a Christian enterprise, and it was in this memorable year that we were led to make the experiment (at first it was no more) of systematically using the Press as a department of the Irish Mission. *PLAIN WORDS on behalf of the Ancient Apostolic Faith* was started as a monthly magazine in August of that year. Its first numbers were addressed exclusively to Roman Catholics, and as a direct Missionary agency I have always regarded these early issues as perhaps the best of the whole series.<sup>1</sup> I came to see, however, that, for various reasons, the paper must be addressed to Protestants as well as Roman Catholics. It was important that Roman Catholic readers should be made to understand that Bible Protestantism was not, as their clergy were continually asserting, a bundle of mere negations, but a grand, coherent system of positive, vital, Scriptural truth. It was equally important that Protestants should be aided in the calm and dispassionate consideration of the doctrines of the Church of Rome, *as these doctrines were really held by intelligent Roman Catholics*. It was most desirable also that the magazine should not continue to be conducted on the basis of a practically free circulation. It was accordingly enlarged in August, 1860, and offered to paying subscribers. It occupied, beyond all doubt, a unique and, as many thought, an impossible position, being addressed equally to Protestants and Roman Catholics, Orangemen and Nationalists. And yet seeking, as all its writers did, uniformly to "speak the truth

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<sup>1</sup> The first volume (1859-'60) is now out of print.

in love," it won its way with both these discordant sections. It was strongly recommended by Dr. Hugh M'Neill, the well-known Protestant controversialist; and I remember getting a very complimentary critique from an Irish Roman Catholic clergyman. After some variations of fortune, which it is needless to detail here, the title *CHRISTIAN IRISHMAN* was adopted in January, 1883, with the words "For God and Country" as its motto. It was a time of revolutionary disturbance, the greater portion of the country having virtually surrendered itself to a reign of terror and outrage. The civil and ecclesiastical authorities seemed equally impotent to restrain the popular passions. It was borne in upon me that it was not controversy, however mildly conducted, nor even theology—if I may say so without the danger of being misunderstood—that was needed in the circumstances, but the enthronement of conscience, the recognition by individuals and by society of the eternal laws of righteousness which God had written with His own finger upon the tables of stone. Under the new designation the magazine at once attracted greatly increased attention. It occupied a broader platform, and it caught a more Irish inspiration—an element which, if it be genuine, always goes straight to the Irishman's heart. While it did not intermeddle with party politics as such, it always vindicated the inalienable civil and spiritual rights of the people, and more especially their right of access to the Word of God, and to the Divine Redeemer. From the outset I was favoured with the assistance of some of the best writers in our

Church—Professor Wallace, Dr. Watts, Dr. William Fleming Stevenson, Dr. William Magill, Dr. George Macloskie, Lowry E. Berkeley, Thomas Lyttle, and others of kindred mould. It will not be considered invidious that I should make special mention of a few of the more stated contributors. In reading the "Recollections of the Irish Highlands,"<sup>1</sup> by the Rev. Henry M'Manus, we seem to be inhaling the invigorating breath of the Connemara mountains, and listening to the sweet music of the Gospel message tenderly spoken by a loving Celtic tongue. Among many admirable papers written by Dr. William B. Kirkpatrick, his "Chapters in Irish History"<sup>2</sup> occupy a prominent place, characterized as they are by wide and accurate information, fairness of historic judgment, and a graceful and cultivated style. Dr. J. G. Murphy, Professor of Hebrew, Assembly's College, Belfast, under the signature of "Comar" ("a Comber Man"), discussed all sorts of subjects that seemed likely to interest and benefit the people, bringing to every topic he touched great erudition, an unaffected sympathy, a generous patriotism, and, what was the most beautiful and most persuasive of all, the simple faith of a little child. For some years the readers of the *Christian Irishman* looked out eagerly for the contributions of "T. C." (the Rev. Professor

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<sup>1</sup> Afterwards published separately (London : Hamilton, Adams & Co.).

<sup>2</sup> Afterwards published separately (London : Hamilton, Adams & Co.).

Thomas Croskery, D.D.,<sup>1</sup> Magee College, Derry), who discoursed each month on topics bearing on the religious and social life of Ireland. It is no disparagement of the other gifted men to say that there was probably not another writer in Ireland who could have produced through consecutive years a series of papers on this testing subject so eminently courteous, judicious, and scholastic. The versatility with which "Cloughmacsimon"<sup>2</sup> dealt from month to month with "Current Events" made his articles a very popular feature of the magazine. Whilst perhaps the most pronounced "Presbyterian" of all the contributors, and by an unfailing instinct evincing his hatred of "Popery" in all its forms, real or suspected, he always showed himself to be animated by the kindest feelings towards his Roman Catholic fellow-countrymen.

#### DIFFICULTIES AND ENCOURAGEMENTS.

In its earliest years the magazine had great difficulties to contend with—difficulties not arising so much from the opposition or indifference of Roman Catholics as from the incredulity of some whose sympathy and help would have been a great encouragement. Not a few representative men looked on the effort as Utopian. One esteemed brother, who occupied a prominent position, frankly

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<sup>1</sup> Arrangements were in progress some years ago for the separate publication of a number of these articles, selected by Professor Croskery himself. Circumstances prevented the design from being carried out at the time. They may yet be presented, with some modification, in pamphlet or book form.

<sup>2</sup> The Rev. Dr. William Irwin, of Bandon, afterwards of Castlerock.

said to me that writing such as the new venture contained was no better than a timid compromise, which could bring no benefit to either Roman Catholic or Protestant readers. I well remember how another friend, still more influential, actually declined even to take the first number into his hands when it was presented to him for consideration. Such incidents would not be noticed here for their own sake, but they indicate what was a very common attitude of mind in those days even among earnest and well-informed Protestants. It was believed that Roman Catholics were filled with such implacable hostility to Gospel truth that there was not the least likelihood of a Protestant magazine like this finding access to even one of them. Romanism on its doctrinal side was too absurd for serious argument: it appeared incredible that its more intelligent adherents could possibly believe in it; if they did, they were intellectual weaklings on whom reason would be thrown away—nothing remained for them but ridicule, judiciously blended with denunciation. It was admitted that our motto, "Speaking the truth in love," was an excellent one in its place, but it had its limitations, and in the present instance these limitations had certainly been disregarded. In the face of all such objections and criticisms the paper quietly made a way for itself, and attained encouraging recognition in its own special sphere. Well authenticated testimonies of blessing that had been brought to Roman Catholic readers were continually reaching me from different quarters. Favourable notices appeared in the secular as well as the religious Press. I do not

know that I ever prized any of these notices so much as one from the *Freeman's Journal*, then in the heyday of its influence as the leading Roman Catholic organ of Ireland. "*The Christian Irishman*," it wrote, "is a paper equally characterized by decided Protestantism and by a most unusual degree of fairness in dealing with Catholics." On another occasion it said—"Our contemporary's opinions are marked by a kindliness and breadth of view seldom found in such literature." I could not but set a high value on such unsolicited testimony, demonstrating as it did that it was possible to state and illustrate the principles of Evangelical Protestantism before our Roman Catholic countrymen in a way that would at least win for these principles a respectful hearing. This is surely an end worth working for.

THE REV. THOMAS CONNELLAN.

When my health broke down in the year 1890, the well-known "Father" Thomas Connellan most generously undertook to relieve me for a time of all responsibility in the editing of the *Christian Irishman*. For a long time I was wholly laid aside, and I have ever since looked upon it as a most gracious Providence of God that this gifted and trusted man, whose acquaintance I had the privilege of making a short time previously, was ready and on the spot, if I may so say, to take my place. For nearly two years he had the entire editorial management of the magazine. He was ably assisted by his brother and my greatly esteemed Christian friend, Mr. Joseph Connellan,<sup>1</sup> who acted

<sup>1</sup> Mr. J. Connellan's striking account of his conversion, entitled *From Bondage to Liberty*, appeared first in the *Christian Irishman*. It was afterwards published separately.

as sub-editor ; and they certainly brought to it an interest, variety, and vigour, combined with an intimate personal knowledge of the Roman system as it actually exists in Ireland, such as had not previously belonged to it.<sup>1</sup> In January, 1892. "Father" Connellan, though he continued in the most brotherly way to give ungrudging help to the *Christian Irishman*, started a magazine of his own on much the same lines. This undertaking of his I heartily approved of, believing that there was a somewhat distinct sphere for each serial, and that he could deal with Romanism from a standpoint which it would not be possible—nor prudent if it were possible—for us to occupy. To show that there was no unworthy competition between us I may quote the following opening paragraph from the "Editor's Chair" in the first number of *The Catholic*:—"Our first duty, on the very threshold of our new departure, is to express our deep obligation to Dr. Hamilton Magee. We feel that we owe to him more than it is possible to express. . . . We are not parting company. The sphere of *The Catholic* is very distinct from that of *The Christian Irishman*. Although David and Jonathan went each his separate way, there was no rivalry between them ; nor is there going to be any between us, for the soul of Jonathan is knit to the soul of David."

I will venture to cite here another testimony from the same source. Mr. Connellan was kind enough

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<sup>1</sup> Many of the Rev. Thomas Connellan's articles in the *Christian Irishman* were afterwards published separately under the title *Old Paths*.

to express his opinion of a little pamphlet, entitled *Hints regarding Christian Work among Roman Catholics*, in which I had described the lines on which the Press and other departments of our Irish Mission work were conducted. I quote his words, as I regard them as in a high degree authoritative :—"I can honestly assure you," he writes, "that I have read nothing coming from a Protestant source half so practical. You have evidently studied the feelings of Roman Catholics deeply. You approach them in the spirit of our Divine Master. And I believe if Irish Roman Catholics had been approached in a similar spirit centuries ago, or if a like spirit animated all Irish Protestants to-day, Ireland's future would not cause as much anxiety as it does."<sup>1</sup>

It is a great gratification to me to know that *The Christian Irishman* continues to be conducted on very much the same lines by the Rev. Thomas Lyle, M.A., who has succeeded me in the superintendence of the Mission.

Taking everything into account, there is hardly a Church in Christendom which has a nobler sphere or a more inviting opportunity than is given to us at the present moment in connection with the Press ; and we should be prepared to throw into a work of such far-reaching importance all the resources of intellect, experience, and enthusiasm that God has placed within our reach.

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<sup>1</sup> A large number of Pamphlets and Lectures were published from time to time in connection with the Mission Press. A list of some of these is appended. See Note Q.



## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE DUBLIN MISSION.—THE GENERAL WORK.

#### II.—COLPORTAGE.

##### EARLY EFFORTS.

COLPORTAGE was early employed as a branch of our work in Connaught. In 18— the Connaught Presbytery appointed a committee to take special charge of this agency, the Rev. John Barnett, of Clogher, acting as convener. Colportage also occupied an important place in Dr. Carlile's Mission in Birr; and it was carried on with more or less encouragement from other Missionary centres.<sup>1</sup> Until comparatively recent years, however, merely it was felt to be not very much more than a tentative effort. The country was really not ripe for it. The people were too illiterate, too poor, and too apathetic and hopeless in their poverty to furnish a field for the successful working of such an agency. We have already seen that it was the lack of National or other schools in the West that originally opened the door for the school agencies inaugurated by Mr. Brannigan and Dr. Edgar. It is, on the other hand, worthy of note that it was the subsequent extension of the National School system over the entire country which—while necessarily lessening the influence of the Mission Schools—

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<sup>1</sup> "A system of reformation," writes Dr. Edgar, in 1857, "has been lately introduced by our Missionaries in the South and West, which, though of foreign growth and name, is simple, practical, and eminently useful, etc." *M. H.*, 1857, p. 258.

effectively prepared the way for the more ubiquitous agency of Colportage. "The first National Schools," says Mr. A. M. Sullivan, writing in 1877, "were woeful makeshifts—thatched cabins with earthen floors, miserable and cheerless in winter, deathly in their effects on the health of teacher and pupil. To set up even one of these in a considerable district was at first a great achievement. . . . From 1845 to the present day the National Schools have been turning out a yearly crop of thousands, yea, tens of thousands, of youth. But, slight as the actual achievement may be from a strictly educational point of view, socially and politically considered, nothing short of a revolution has been effected. There is now scarcely a farm-house, or working-man's house in all the land, in which the boy or girl of fifteen, or the young woman of twenty-five, cannot read the newspaper 'for the old people,' and transact their correspondence."<sup>1</sup> Such was Mr. Sullivan's testimony twenty-five years ago; and few men were more competent to give a correct estimate of the situation.<sup>2</sup> "*Them* institutions," said a Tipperary man to one of our Missionaries some years afterwards, as he pointed to a National School, "have done more than anything else to teach us to think for ourselves." This steady growth of education, intelligence, and sense of responsibility among the people necessarily invested the agency of Colportage with a wholly new importance.

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<sup>1</sup> *New Ireland*, chap. II. Glasgow: Cameron & Ferguson.

<sup>2</sup> The progress of political agitation since has given immense additional force to Mr. Sullivan's statement.

“THE BIBLE AND COLPORTAGE SOCIETY OF IRELAND.”

TO the BIBLE AND COLPORTAGE SOCIETY OF IRELAND belongs the high honour of having placed the work of Christian Colportage in the very forefront of Home evangelistic efforts. This truly noble Society owed its inception, under God, to the fervid missionary zeal of the Rev. Lowry Edmonds Berkeley, of Lurgan—one of the most devoted Christian patriots our Church has ever had the privilege of enrolling among her members. For many years of ceaseless toil, without the stimulus of any earthly ambition or reward, he consecrated himself to the advocacy, and superintendence in its minutest details, of this great enterprise, all the while having the oversight of a large and attached congregation. He had the rare advantage of being associated in this work with the well-known Rev. Dr. James M'Cosh<sup>1</sup> (then of Belfast, afterwards of Princeton, U.S.A.), who, in addition to his other distinguished attainments, was endowed with a singular sagacity in the conduct of philanthropic and missionary undertakings. The Bible and Colportage Society was the immediate fruit of the Great Awakening and Revival of 1859. At first its promoters chiefly contemplated the needs of our Presbyterian people in Ulster; but when they came formally to organize the Society, they framed it on broader lines. Ireland (not Ulster merely) was to be the sphere of its operations; and its membership and management were thrown open to

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. M'Cosh took a keen interest in our Mission in Dublin, and I was often deeply indebted to his wise counsel and powerful support.

persons belonging to all the Evangelical Churches. The work was prosecuted on this undenominational or rather inter-denominational basis for many years; the General Assembly—while it strongly sympathized with the movement, and in many ways helped it—claiming no share in its administration. It was found, however, that by far the greater proportion of those who identified themselves with the Society and contributed to its maintenance were members of the Presbyterian Church. There was no *general* co-operation on the part of others. So signally was this the case, that I remember Mr. Berkeley, at one of the Annual Christian Conventions in Dublin, after making an earnest appeal for hearty united effort in this great national enterprise, saying, with considerable vehemence to the large assembly whom he addressed, “If we cannot in a country like Ireland unite in work like this, I do not see what is the use of our Conventions.” It was a somewhat bold utterance; but, considering the disappointment he had long experienced in this matter, it was not, from his point of view, a very unnatural one. The other Churches preferred to work agencies like this under their own direct control, and I am not prepared to say that they were wrong. As regards ourselves, it came to be increasingly felt that, in the changed conditions of the country, there was danger of our ceasing as a Church to have an Irish Mission at all, if we failed to throw ourselves heart and soul into the distinctive work of Colportage. The General Assembly, therefore, was led to consolidate and enlarge this department of its Home work; and in so doing it not only secured more effective

superintendence of the agency itself, but a greatly increased interest on the part of its own Christian membership. It was, of course, recognized that there was no necessity for the work being in any unworthy sense *sectarian* because it was loyally *denominational*. There is a great distinction between the two things, although they are often confounded.<sup>1</sup>

In 1887 an immense impetus was given to this branch of the general work, and indeed to every department of the Irish Mission. The extension of the Colportage agency already referred to had involved an outlay greater than the ordinary income of the "Irish Mission" sufficed to meet; and it seemed for a time as if there was no way of avoiding serious financial embarrassment but by a considerable reduction in the number of our Colporteurs. This was felt to be a threatened disaster of the gravest kind, especially in view of the increasing demand of our countrymen—the younger section of them in particular—for a wider range of interesting reading. The devout patriotism of our Christian women, however—Belfast, as was natural, taking the lead—happily saved us from the impending danger. Through their hearty and generous co-operation, "THE IRISH COLPORTAGE ASSOCIATION in Connection with the General Assembly"<sup>2</sup> was formed.

<sup>1</sup> The Bible and Colportage Society of Ireland still prosecutes its labours on inter-denominational lines. There are not a few persons in Ireland and elsewhere who on this ground prefer to support it rather than an agency having direct Church connection.

<sup>2</sup> The first officers of this Association were:—The Moderator of the General Assembly, *President*; Rev. Jackson Smyth, D.D., *Vice-President*; Mrs. Potts, Mrs. Robert Anderson, Rev. H. Magee, D.D.; Rev. W. J. Jackson, M.A., *Hon. Secretaries*; R. W. Corry, Esq., *Hon. Treasurer*. The first suggestion as to the formation of this Society came from Mrs. Margaret Potts, sister of the late Rev. Dr. W. D. Killen, the revered President of the Assembly's College, Belfast.

It was wrought with the greatest energy ; and, as a consequence, the full staff of Colporteurs was retained, a new stability and vigour being at the same time imparted to this in many respects unparalleled agency. In recalling the circumstances, I feel bound to say that never during my long Missionary life was I so much encouraged in my work as by the splendid enthusiasm of the founders of this Association. I had not previously understood so well how tender and true, and at the same time how widespread, is the love of Ireland in the hearts of the Christian women of Ulster ; nor how great the resources of prayerful and self-denying sympathy our Church has at her service, in her noble ambition of at least helping to bring Ireland to the feet of Christ.

It is unnecessary at this time of day to dwell on the importance of Colportage as an evangelistic agency. There is hardly a great Missionary enterprise in the world in which, in one form or another, it is not assigned a prominent and in some instances even a primary place. If it is needed anywhere it is needed in Ireland. So far as the Church of Rome is concerned, Ireland has for generations been practically a *land without the Bible*<sup>1</sup> in any version whatever ; and were it not for outside effort, it would be a land without the Bible at the present moment. Throughout the greater part of the country there is an utter absence not only of Scriptural literature, but of any instructive literature worthy of the name. Even the more Protestant districts, to our great discredit, are very inadequately provided with book-shops where healthful reading can be ob-

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See Note R.

tained ; in the Roman Catholic districts it is out of all comparison worse. Notwithstanding the changes that recent years have brought, the clergy still wield an unrivalled power; but none know better than the members of their flocks that this enormous power is not put forth in any commensurate way for the intellectual and social elevation of the people. Take the case of the young men, for example, who in every community are exposed to quite exceptional temptations. There is practically nothing done for them ; and there are abundant indications that they bitterly feel it to be so. There are no organizations or agencies for their special benefit, such as are to be found in almost all Protestant localities. There are, of course, no Bible classes ; there are no Young Men's Christian Associations, no courses of public lectures on topics of general interest. There may be parishes here and there under the spiritual direction of comparatively progressive men where it is different ; but taking a general survey of the country, it may be confidently affirmed that there is nothing—nothing that could bear a moment's examination—provided by the Roman Catholic clergy, as such, to stimulate the intelligence of young Irishmen, lift them out of the dreary rut of monotonous routine, and in some suitable measure meet their earnest craving for wider knowledge.<sup>1</sup> The great fact with which we are confronted is that we have a reading people to deal with such as

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<sup>1</sup> Of recent years, as the direct result of the universal awaking of the national mind, greater facilities have been developed for the circulation of secular literature.

never claimed our attention in the past. In their worst condition, our countrymen were always a singularly gifted race, though from unfortunate circumstances they were for the most part quite illiterate.<sup>1</sup> But, election statistics notwithstanding, they are illiterate no longer—at least, the younger generation is not. They can read, and they *do* read, and *will* read. Brought into the great current of the world's thought as never before, they have begun to learn the elementary lesson that the possession of the capacity to think involves the right to think, in the face of all dictation, clerical or otherwise. They have no wish to become Protestants--the Divine credentials of Protestantism, whether of the English or Scottish type, not being quite so clear to them as we might think desirable. But if we are able to approach them on absolutely common ground, laying aside all pride, hauteur, assumption of racial or ecclesiastical superiority, we shall find that they are not impervious to the sublime message of a free salvation; they are not unwilling even to learn something more regarding the nature of Protestantism as a religion, and the secret of its power to promote at least the temporal well-being of communities subject to its sway.

We send our Colporteurs among these sharp-witted, inquisitive, kindly people. Much care is, of course, taken in the selection of our men. In a service like this, everything may be said to depend,

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. A. M. Sullivan makes the fine remark that previous to the introduction of the National School system it was "illiteracy, not ignorance in a degrading sense, that prevailed in Ireland."—*New Ireland*, chapter II.



instrumentally, on our agents—on their character as men of God, and on their aptitude for the work and heartiness in it. I knew all the Assembly's Colporteurs personally and intimately for many years, and I do not think that, taken as a whole, you would find a higher class of agents connected with any Christian organization in the Kingdom. The same care is still exercised with regard to their appointment. When approved and specially trained, they are sent out with a carefully selected packet of books. These books, for the most part, convey a distinctly Christian message; but it has been found most desirable to include volumes and publications selected on the principle of the Pure Literature Society of London.

#### THE BIBLE FIRST.

We ever place the Book of God at the very centre of our work. The blasphemous utterance often made from the altar and elsewhere in the earlier days of our Mission, that the (Protestant) Bible is the "Devil's Book," terrifies the people no longer; they but think it all the greater wonder that their spiritual guides do not provide them with the true Bible. They cannot understand—increasing numbers of them—why of all books in the world, the Word of God should be practically buried out of view, as if the very sight of it bred pestilence; and it awakens strange misgivings in many a thoughtful mind that such a thing is possible under the sanction of religious teachers claiming to be the direct representatives of God. The attitude of distrust and suspicion so generally taken by Roman

Catholics, especially the more uneducated, in reference to the "Protestant Bible," is not unreasonable. The great bulk of our people adopt precisely the same attitude towards the Roman Catholic (Douay) Bible, and I suppose that most of us would not be disposed to blame them very severely on that account. We must accord the same freedom of judgment and of action to others that we claim for ourselves; and we have no right to attribute to mere ignorant bigotry the natural reluctance of Roman Catholics, in the first instance at least, to have their faith decided by the testimony of the Protestant Bible. It is, therefore, a matter of the first importance that there is ready to our hands a cheap edition of the Roman Catholic English New Testament (*without Notes*), which we regard as constituting, from many points of view, one of the most interesting missionary agencies at our disposal. This version is gladly welcomed by large numbers of persons who could not be persuaded to possess themselves of a copy of the Protestant Bible or New Testament. Within comparatively recent years an immense number of copies have been put into circulation, the greater portion of which have been *purchased* from the Colporteurs of one or other of the Societies. Our agents, in selling this Testament, recommend the purchase at the same time of the Authorized or the Revised Version<sup>1</sup> for the purpose of careful comparison; and it has been found that few things are more calculated to awaken inquiry among

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<sup>1</sup> The Douay Testament referred to is sold by our agents at 3d. each. An excellent copy of the Authorised (or "Protestant") New Testament may be had for a penny.

intelligent Roman Catholics than the discovery, often wholly unexpected, that the "two Bibles" which they had been led to regard as mutually destructive, teach substantially the same way of salvation through direct personal access to the Living Christ and the entire trust of the heart in Him alone.

#### AN INTRODUCTION AND A MESSAGE.

Even in the many cases in which the Colporteur is unable to effect any sale at all, his pack of books is fitted to give him a much more favourable introduction. It can be readily understood that under the old system of Scripture-readers or Catechists, it was not easy for the agent who called at a Roman Catholic house with a Protestant Bible in his hand or in his pocket to explain satisfactorily the object of his visit. The simple question, "What is it you are going to read?" would generally be sufficient to bring even a skilful visitor into difficulties. He would be obliged to say in effect, "I am about to read the Bible." "What Bible?" "The Authorized Bible or the Protestant Bible." In the majority of instances this would end the interview:—"You had better be off as soon as you can. We want neither you nor your false Bible." It must I think be admitted that in the circumstances supposed, this would not be a very unnatural or reprehensible reply. It is different in the case of a Colporteur. He has his books to sell; and it devolves upon him, if he gain any sort of hearing at all, to give a general idea of his wares. He has books on Temperance, books about Ireland,

biographies, histories, good stories, poetry, books and pamphlets for the household, the garden, the farm. He has books for the children, picture cards, illustrated Scripture texts, almanacs, etc., etc. I cannot imagine any means that could be devised more likely to obtain access at once natural and kindly. And if his case of books and periodicals help to secure him an opening, it also provides him with a message. Christian literature, characteristically non-controversial, constitutes the chief portion of his stock—the Bible and the New Testament being of course supreme. The Douay Testament already referred to is of inestimable value in this connection. The Colporteur will probably read as a specimen of its contents such a passage as Matthew xi. 28, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour, and are burdened, and I will refresh you;" or John iii. 16, "God so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting"—in each case adding a few words of familiar explanation as he may consider desirable. With or without such words of explanation, verses like these have often come home to the hearts of the people with all the impressiveness of a new revelation.

#### COLPORTAGE AND THE PRESS CONJOINT AGENCIES.

We cannot speak of Colportage apart from the Press, and in a country like Ireland the Christian Press must of necessity be to a considerable extent dependent on Colportage. All are familiar with the prophetic *dictum* of John Fox, the Martyrologist:

"I suppose that either the Pope must abolish printing, or he must seek a new world to reign over; for else, as the world standeth, printing will doubtless abolish *him*." Printing has not yet succeeded in abolishing him, but it is almost certainly the human instrumentality he most dreads. As a Roman Catholic newspaper puts it, "Protestant preaching does little injury to the Church; the Press is our dangerous foe. The Press is the needle-gun of the truth. In God's name let us use it." There is no ecclesiastical community in Christendom to-day so much alive as the Church of Rome to the transcendent influence of the Press, the popular Press especially, as a defensive and propagandist agency. With the help of the Jesuit Order she is everywhere working this mighty agency with an almost superhuman energy. The Rev. Thomas Connellan—an exceptionally high authority on all such subjects—tells us that the Roman Catholic clergy of Ireland fear nothing so much as the Press. It would be difficult to imagine a more striking illustration of the correctness of this testimony than is afforded by the fact that the late Cardinal Cullen, the apostle in Ireland of the most advanced Ultramontane claims, whether of doctrine or administration, when applied to as one of the great dignitaries of the Church for a statement of his views regarding the proposed promulgation of the doctrine of the "Immaculate Conception," actually urged Pope Pius IX. NOT to define the doctrine as an article of the Catholic Faith, on the ground that "the Church would thereby be exposed to new assaults by embittered

and ever-vigilant enemies, who would doubtless seize occasion thence of chattering, 'Lo! the Church of the Catholics has devised a new article of faith after ages, which, as is evident, *was not believed everywhere, nor always, nor by all*. What new light then dawns now upon that Church which was denied to its Council of Trent?' " However incredible it may appear to some, he reported to the Pope that he was joined in this protest by "the Jesuit Fathers at Dublin, almost all the Professors of our National College, Maynooth, and many others, both priests and laymen, conspicuous for zeal for religion."<sup>1</sup> It was well understood that it was a free and outspoken Press they were afraid of. The portentous Decree, carried, it might almost be said, by physical force, was promulgated on the 8th December, 1854. I remember examining with much interest the issue of the *Dublin Freeman's Journal* the following day. I thought at first that there was no reference to the subject at all in this great Roman Catholic organ; but after minute search I discovered in a corner of the paper, printed in the smallest type, a paragraph of two or three lines simply stating that the expected decision had been arrived at. There was no remark of any kind made as to the introduction of this new dogma, which according to the strict Roman theory binds every Roman Catholic in the world under pain of eternal perdition.

ADAPTED TO ALL CLASSES.

It is an important recommendation both of Colportage and the Mission Press that they are

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<sup>1</sup> See Pusey's *Eirenicon* pp. 403-405.

fitted to reach *all classes of the community*. Some agencies are but local in their immediate influence; some are adapted only for the young; while a large amount of earnest work carried on throughout the country is designed exclusively to reach the case of the very poor, indeed I might say the expectants of charitable relief in one form or another. But Colportage and the Press are more comprehensive in their outlook. They are not only fitted to reach, but they do reach old and young, rich and poor, learned and unlearned, priest and people alike. This is an essential feature of any Mission which aims, as ours certainly does, to be a Mission to the whole country.

## CHAPTER XV.

### THE DUBLIN MISSION—THE GENERAL WORK— (Continued).

#### III.—COLPORTEURS' TRAINING CLASS.

THE necessity of definite training for our Colporteurs was first suggested to me in the course of my own personal experience. When I went to Connaught in 1848 I did not understand the peculiar nature or the exceptional difficulties of this Irish work, and had it not been for the training I received in the West, I could not possibly have thought of undertaking the far more difficult enterprise of endeavouring to establish a Mission in Dublin.

During the early years of the Dublin Mission district visitation was carried on mainly by Catechists or Scripture-readers. Some of these agents seemed to possess an inherent affinity for the work. The plenteous baptism of love which they had received more than made up for the want of educational or other qualifications. I have referred in a previous chapter to one conspicuous case of this kind. There were other agents, most suitable men in many respects, who did not meet with much encouragement. In their intercourse with the people they did not know exactly how to introduce themselves—*how to begin*—and it need hardly be said that ours is emphatically a Mission in which “*how to begin*” is a matter of supreme moment. Our Colporteurs generally come from



Ulster, many of them from its most Protestant districts. They have had comparatively little intercourse with Roman Catholics. I am not maligning them when I say that, in the first instance, they bring to their work a very inadequate knowledge of the Roman Catholic system. They may understand it very well as regards its more external manifestations—social, political, and even religious. But they do not comprehend its *inwardness* as a religion, which holds the deepest convictions of the people, moulds their character, and controls their daily life. They cannot conceive how it can possibly wield such a marvellous fascination over its votaries. They are apt to set it down to ignorance, prejudice, obstinacy, or perhaps something even worse. Such theories, however, are not calculated to minimize the difficulties of the service they have undertaken, and it is certain that in the case of multitudes their diagnosis is wholly incorrect. Some of the most gifted and earnestly religious spirits in the world have submitted, and are at this moment submitting, voluntarily and with all their heart, to this portentous system. Even the more uneducated classes of the Celtic peasantry of Ireland are ready in the great majority of instances to give a reason of the hope that is in them, which is at least sufficient to show that the Christian worker has something to reckon with besides mere uninformed bigotry. Romanism must be *studied*—carefully studied, patiently studied, and respectfully studied by all who labour in this field. In the case of Colporteurs this involves the necessity in most

instances of specific training. An agent endowed with a true Missionary instinct, and one especially who has been suitably trained for this special work, will experience little difficulty in introducing himself and his message to a goodly number of persons almost any day.<sup>1</sup> I do not say that his access will be universal, but under ordinary circumstances it will be very considerable. A man who is quite disqualified for this special kind of service, and who *feels* that he is disqualified, will be under great temptation to shirk this side of the work altogether, or what is perhaps worse, he may find himself speedily landed in irritating and most mischievous controversy.

#### AN ILLUSTRATION.

Let me give an illustration. Many years ago an intelligent and earnest young Scotchman was accepted as a candidate for the office of Colporteur on the recommendation of a well-known Irish Minister connected with the Free Church. As the Training Class was not to begin for a few weeks longer, he went out in the interval with some books to work among the people as best he could. I happened to meet him one day at a watering-place,

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<sup>1</sup> What is here said is not intended to discourage private Christians from bearing personal testimony for Christ and His present, free, complete salvation before their Roman Catholic neighbours. If things were as they ought to be among us, spontaneous, consistent, loving witness of this kind, authenticated by the silent testimony of a Christian life, would be one of the mightiest evangelistic factors in the land. But the testimony must be natural, unconstrained, and utterly removed from a wanton spirit of controversy, as well as from all petty proselytizing aims.

not far from Dublin, trudging along with his bag. He looked somewhat disheartened. I asked him how he was succeeding. "Oh, very badly," he said; "I have been nearly killed." "That is serious," I said. "What has happened to you?" "Do you see that house," he replied, "on the other side of the field?" pointing to a cottage not far off; "I was nearly losing my life there." "How did it all come about?" "Well, I called at the house. There was a woman in the kitchen. I noticed a large picture on the wall, and I saw at once that it was a picture of the Virgin Mary." "That is not uncommon," I told him, "in these parts. Did you make any remark?" "Of course, I told her that it was idolatry!" "And how," I enquired, "did she receive that most conciliatory observation?" "She ran and seized a kettle of boiling water that was on the fire and threw it at me; and if I had not run off as fast as I could, I might have been scalded to death." "She showed a great deal of pluck," I told him. "It is possible that you were the best Christian of the two; but certainly the decent woman had the advantage of you in the matter of common sense. I should not like that you had been badly scalded, but a few drops out of the kettle on your nether extremities would have quickened your sense of propriety. You knew that her house, poor as it was, was her castle. What right had you to go in and insult her under her own roof? You would do ten thousand times more harm than good if you went about your work in any such way." I added a few more words of a more reassuring kind. This young man subsequently attended the Training Class for about three

months. He was a most attentive and deeply interested student. I came across his path a short time afterwards in a country place near the city. "Well, Alek," I said, "how are you getting on?" "Oh!" he replied, "it is quite different now. I am having a good deal of encouragement. *I know enough of the controversy to keep me out of controversy.*" This was a very general experience among our trained agents.

#### DR. CARLILE'S TESTIMONY.

The views I had been led to entertain on this subject of training were greatly confirmed by the emphatic testimony of Dr. Carlile, of Parsonstown. Like our great national Apostle, this gifted son of the Scottish Covenant became an Irishman for the sake of Ireland. After an experience of upwards of seven years in Parsonstown (Birr), he bore emphatic testimony on this subject of *training* in a speech delivered before the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland<sup>1</sup> (23rd May, 1846). The speech was afterwards published in pamphlet form, in compliance with an influential requisition of some Christian friends in Dublin. I have often quoted the following noble sentences from this address, and it is too valuable to be omitted here<sup>2</sup> :—

"The difficulty does not lie," says Dr. Carlile, "in obtaining persons of piety and intrepidity to undertake such an agency (Scripture-readers, Colporteurs, etc.), but in the want of such persons *possessing the required education*. And I know of nothing that Ireland so much requires as an

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<sup>1</sup> It is worth noting that this was previous to the Famine.

<sup>2</sup> The whole pamphlet was reproduced in *Plain Words*, 1872. Its title was *Justice (in Spiritual Things) to Ireland*.

extensive and efficient apparatus for educating and training pious persons, in the humbler ranks of life, as well-instructed Scripture-readers, intelligent, well-trained teachers—men skilled in the use of the Word of God, with sufficient fluency and readiness in conversation to enable them to set forth the great doctrines of Revelation plainly and forcibly, and to meet objections. . . . It is not my business, and certainly not my intention, to say anything disrespectful of colleges for the cultivation of what are accounted the higher departments of education; but, fixing my eye exclusively on the exigencies of Ireland, *I would rather occupy a very subordinate station in a seminary for bringing forward such a class of men as I have described, than the highest and most influential in a college for the cultivation of mere science and literature.*"

## SUBJECTS OF STUDY.

The Assembly's Training Class for Colporteurs was begun in the year 1867, and was continued until my retirement from the Mission in 1897.<sup>1</sup> During that period upwards of a hundred young men passed through it, of whom a small number belonged to the Bible and Colportage Society. They turned out (with perhaps two or three exceptions) to be most valuable agents, and they united in testifying to the great practical benefit the Class had brought to them in the daily prosecution of their duties. Among the subjects taken up in the Class were the following:—

(1) *The Shorter Catechism.* The striking statement of Dr. Philip Schaff, that the Epistle to the Romans "prophetically anticipates and positively overthrows

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<sup>1</sup> The class continues to be maintained by my successor, Rev. Thomas Lyle, M.A., on practically the same lines.

every essential error of Romanism," may in a real though subordinate sense be applied to the *Shorter Catechism*, which is in fact largely drawn from the Epistle to the Romans. In view not only of the distinctive errors of Romanism but of the loose and disjointed doctrinal ideas so prevalent throughout the Protestant community, our agents were minutely instructed in this incomparable compend of Pauline Theology.

(2) *The Maynooth Catechism* (virtually the *Butler's Catechism* of former days). Other similar manuals were studied; but the fact that the *Maynooth Catechism* bears the "imprimatur" of all the Irish Roman Catholic bishops, and is also a principal subject of examination for all candidates for Confirmation and is therefore familiar at least to the younger generation, makes it a matter of great importance that our agents should be well acquainted with it. It was accordingly considered in detail, *the points of agreement with Biblical teaching being carefully pointed out as well as the points of disagreement.*

(3) *The Douay Testament (without Notes)*. Irish Colporteurs cannot be too well acquainted with this book.

(4) A good Handbook (Protestant) of the Roman Catholic controversy. Bagot's *Protestant Catechism* was found to furnish, in small compass, an excellent summary. It deals more with *principles* than many of the then popular textbooks, which were too often taken up with somewhat unsatisfactory *details*.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Several small yet comprehensive handbooks have appeared in recent years—e.g., *The Primer of Roman Catholicism*, by Dr. Charles H. H. Wright (R.T.S.). *Protestant Principles*, by Dr. Munro Gibson (Hodder & Stoughton).

(5) Leading outlines of Irish History.<sup>1</sup>

(6) Various publications issued by the Mission Press.

There was no part of my work which I enjoyed more than the oversight of this most interesting Class, or in the discharge of which I felt myself more directly engaged in promoting the special aims of the Irish Mission. I had the greatest delight in helping the men in their earnest desire to be spiritually helpful to their countrymen; and I can say with devout gratitude that they heartily reciprocated my Christian friendship. Some, of course, were more efficient than others; but, taking them all together, they were (and are, as I write) a great strength and credit to our Church and an immense blessing to Ireland. During the long and pleasant years in which I had charge of this Colportage Agency many of the men were removed from our ranks, some obtaining more prominent appointments, a number going forward to the Christian ministry, many being called into the immediate presence of the Master whom they devoutly loved and faithfully served—their death in some instances having been hastened, as I have always believed, by the exceptional severity of their work.<sup>2</sup> Very tender and sacred memories are asso-

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<sup>1</sup> An excellent pamphlet, entitled *Facts in Irish History which Protestants and Roman Catholics alike should Know*, prepared by the late Dr. Kirkpatrick in connection with the Mission Press, is now out of print. There is much need for a *Penny History of Ireland*, written attractively and in a broad, generous, patriotic spirit.

<sup>2</sup> In order to place the work of Colportage on a more satisfactory basis, the Board of Missions has recently made important arrangements regarding salaries and provision for old age in the case of well-approved agents.

ciated with most of their names. The Church has come of late years to appreciate the importance and singular adaptation to the circumstances of Ireland of this special agency; but I do not think that she thoroughly understands its peculiar difficulties. These difficulties are encountered to the full by our permanent agents, who traverse wide and it may be inhospitable areas of the country in all seasons and in all weathers, carrying as they best can their well-packed stock of books. It is impossible that this feature of their work should be changed—it is inherent in its very nature. But in another and most real sense, their labours might often be lightened by a kindly word of sympathy on the part of the Christian people whom they may happen to meet in the course of their visitation; and a new strength and courage would undoubtedly be imparted to them by the consciousness that they were continually borne in affectionate remembrance by all among us, who long and pray for the spiritual regeneration of Ireland.



## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE DUBLIN MISSION—THE GENERAL WORK—

*(Continued).*

#### IV.—DUBLIN MISSION LIBRARY.

IN describing the leading agencies connected with our work in Dublin, I cannot wholly avoid a reference to the Assembly's "Dublin Mission Library." It began to be formed in connection with the Controversial Meetings which were held during the earlier days of the Mission; in subsequent years the important place occupied by the Press Agency made it a still more necessary part of our equipment. At the time I write, this library comprises upwards of 1,000 volumes, besides a large number of valuable pamphlets. It embraces books on Theology and Church History, more especially as they bear on the great and many sided subject of Romanism. A considerable proportion of the volumes relate to Ireland, prominence being given to the vexed and, from a Missionary point of view, exceptionally important, subject of Irish History. There is hardly a national history in the world which for generations has been written with more reckless partizanship than that of Ireland. As a rule, this charge cannot be fairly restricted to the writers of any particular Church or party. Until comparatively recent years, during which a juster

and more judicial spirit has been gradually asserting itself (especially on the Protestant side), the charge might have been made against the Protestant almost equally with the Roman Catholic historian. The great body of Irish Roman Catholics who are able to read know much better than Protestants do the history of their country, at least as it is depicted for them by their popular writers. They know the story of its "wrongs," at any rate—their newspapers take good care of that—and they have little respect for religious instructors who betray lack of knowledge or of interest in regard to such engrossing themes. Hence the necessity for this special study on the part of those who would win the attention of their more intelligent countrymen to the Gospel message. I have always cherished an intense desire that our Church, *as such*, should come more and more to regard herself as a great Missionary organization in and for Ireland. Work such as I am describing should not be restricted to the paid agents of the Irish Mission. Irish Presbyterianism should in the noblest sense be itself an Irish Mission. In seeking to give effect to this high ambition we do not for a moment think of parting with those agents who are specially designated to the work and supported in it. On the contrary, the number of such agents should be largely increased. But were we as a great Christian community in the land, plenteously baptized from Heaven with a loving Missionary enthusiasm, the voluntary might be far more important than the paid agency. It would be more spontaneous, more ubiquitous,

more influential. The open Bible of an humble, consecrated Christian life would be read of all the people. Our younger Ministers might render service of incalculable value to their country by means of the press. In too many instances the fine literary endowments which many of them possess are practically lost both to themselves and to Ireland from their downright want of inviting opportunity for their exercise. They are often, for instance, in retired rural parishes, and even in important provincial towns, without access to suitable books to aid them in this somewhat unusual line of inquiry. It is impossible in the great majority of cases that they should provide themselves with the literature (oftentimes most expensive) required for even the moderate study of some great topic of national religious interest. There should be a well-stocked library available, under proper regulations, for the use of such men. The Dublin Mission Library aims at contributing in some degree to fulfil this function. It has been largely availed of hitherto, but it would become much more useful in the direction indicated were it made more comprehensive and more representative. Many books are wanting which may be truly said to be quite essential to its proper equipment. The Library is the property of the Board of Missions, acting for the General Assembly,<sup>1</sup> and is under the immediate custody of the Convener of the Irish

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<sup>1</sup> Editor's note—It is only right to add, what Dr. Magee's modesty omits, that the Mission Library was collected by Dr. Magee himself, and generously presented by him to the Board of Missions when he retired from active service.

Mission, the Secretary of the Assembly's Missions, and the Superintendent of the Dublin Mission, who acts as Librarian.<sup>1</sup> Should any readers of these pages desire by donations of money or books to promote the greater efficiency of the library, information will, I doubt not, be gladly supplied to them by any of the above officers.<sup>2</sup> I am in a position, from long experience, to bear the most emphatic testimony to the immense value of the service which would be rendered to our Church as a great Missionary force in Ireland by a generous support of this Dublin Mission Library.

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<sup>1</sup> The following (for the time being) hold the offices referred to :— Rev. Samuel Prenter, D.D. (*Convener* of Irish Mission) ; Rev. George M'Farland, B.A. (*Secretary* of the Assembly's Missions) ; and Rev. Thomas Lyle, M.A. (*Superintendent* of Dublin Mission).

<sup>2</sup> In order to prevent unsuitable volumes being sent, it is very desirable that Christian friends who propose to contribute *books* should, if possible, previously confer with some of the parties named.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### OUR PRINCIPLES AND AIMS.<sup>1</sup>

OUT of several topics that might be considered under this head, let me select *three*. They will be found to be recognized principles underlying every branch of our work wherever carried on. I am bold enough to ask the special attention of Roman Catholics who may venture to read these pages to the following statement of our aims and general methods.

In dealing with our countrymen on the supreme subject of personal salvation :—

I.—WE PROCEED FROM THE POINTS IN WHICH WE AGREE RATHER THAN FROM THOSE ON WHICH WE DISAGREE.

The points of disagreement are momentous and vital; it is almost impossible to exaggerate their gravity, especially when we take into account their bearing upon the condition of great communities. The very existence of the Reformed Churches is a loud and continuous protest before God and man against what we regard as the perilous innovations of the Papacy. But it must never be forgotten that between us and the Roman Church there are many

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<sup>1</sup> The substance of this and the following chapter appeared in pamphlet form, in 1879, under the title *Our Principles and Agencies*. The experience of the intervening years has greatly confirmed the views I then expressed; and as the pamphlet is now out of print, it has been thought well to reproduce a portion of it here (slightly modified).

fundamental points of agreement. It is the writer's firm conviction that in much of the Christian work that has been put forth, and is being put forth throughout our country, these points of agreement have not received the recognition to which they are entitled.

#### ROMANISM A DUPLEX SYSTEM—THE TRIDENTINE CREED.

Let it be well understood, both by Protestants and Roman Catholics, that in the compact and elaborate system of doctrine which has been formulated in the course of ages by the Church of Rome there are *two distinct elements*, which, for want of a better phraseology, may be designated the *Catholic* (or Evangelical) *Element* and the *Roman* (or Papal) *Element*. No one can possibly understand the genius of Romanism who fails to take into account these two constituent elements of its doctrinal system. We shall find both in the recognized popular creed of the Church of Rome—the Creed of Pope Pius IV.<sup>1</sup> This Creed, which presents a summary of the *then* existing tenets of the Church, was composed shortly after the commencement of the Reformation and signed by Pope Pius IV., A.D. 1564. It consists of twenty-four articles.

#### (1) The *Catholic* (or Evangelical) *Element*.

The first twelve Articles consist of the Nicene Creed (A.D. 325), or rather the Niceno-Constanti-

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<sup>1</sup> This creed arose out of the Decrees of the Council of Trent, A.D. 1545—1563, and was known as *Professio Fidei Tridentina*. With a view to ready reference, this historic creed is appended. (See Note S.)

nopolitan Creed (A.D. 381)—a compendium of doctrine which is accepted by all Evangelical Churches, and which enumerates what the Nicene Fathers regarded as the foundation truths of Christianity. Such doctrines as these find a place in the Nicene (or Constantinopolitan) Creed, and therefore in the Creed of Pope Pius IV.:—The Existence of God ; His Unity ; the Supreme Deity of Christ ; the Personality and Divinity of the Holy Spirit ; the Incarnation of Christ ; His Substitutionary Sacrifice ; His Burial ; His Resurrection ; His Ascension to the right hand of the Father ; His coming again to Judgment ; the Resurrection of the Dead ; the Life of future Blessedness, etc. There are, indeed, statements about “ One Catholic Church ” and “ One Baptism for the remission of sins ” which, understood in a non-spiritual sense, are at least suggestive of Roman doctrines afterwards fully developed ; but the Creed of Nice and Constantinople claimed to be in thorough accord with Scripture teaching. *The Church of Rome has never surrendered a single article of that ancient Creed ;* and fallen though she is from the doctrinal simplicity and purity of early days, these foundation truths of the Christian faith still lie immovably at the centre of her dogmatic system. In Ireland we have to deal with a population, who with more or less intelligence, hold by this Creed in its entirety—the old part as well as the new. The central doctrines just named are not unfamiliar to the great bulk of our Roman Catholic countrymen.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>It is to a great extent different in Italy, Spain, Mexico, and other Roman Catholic countries.

Mixed up with the most pernicious error, they find recognition in the popular catechisms taught to their children, in their ordinary books of devotion, and (strange as the statement may seem to some Protestant readers) in the Mass-book itself. There is much religious ignorance in Ireland ; but—let us do our countrymen justice—it does not take the form of blank unacquaintance with the primary elements of Christian truth such as is often to be found, for example, in some of the rural and manufacturing districts of England. There is much practical irreligion throughout the land ; but it has not as yet to any considerable extent taken, as in too many other countries, the form of scepticism and infidelity. Whatever their faults, and they are not few (any more than our own), it must be conceded that Irish Roman Catholics are characteristically a *religious* people, and that they cherish a profound regard for what they believe to be the things of God. Indeed, there is much truth in the thoughtful statement of Dr. Carlile, that “their very errors often spring from an unenlightened or misplaced reverence for Divine things.”

#### COMMON GROUND.

Our Missionaries in foreign countries tell us that one of the most formidable difficulties of their work lies in the circumstance that there is almost no common ground between them and the native races, no common religious phraseology, almost no common religious conceptions. We do not in Ireland meet with that difficulty to anything like the same extent. The great words God, Christ,



Sin, Atonement, Salvation, Judgment, Hell, Heaven, are common property between us, and *in the main* they express to both of us common ideas. Here lies one great secret—I had almost said *the* great secret—of effective Missionary work in Ireland, namely, the recognizing of this mutually accepted truth, and the turning of it to the best account. In this way we shall make it manifest that our religion is not open to the charge of being a new one: that it is not, as Roman Catholics generally suppose it to be, a merely negative one, much less a personally or nationally hostile one: but one which casts a Divine light on that tremendous problem of the guilty conscience which calls for a solution in every human breast.

(2) *The Roman (or Papal) Element.*

The Roman Element consists of the more modern and, in an important sense, the more really distinctive doctrines of the Church of Rome. The second twelve Articles of the Creed of Pope Pius IV. present these comparatively new doctrines in a compendious form. They declare the teaching of the Roman Church on such subjects as Tradition; the Authority of the Church; Penance; Transubstantiation; the Sacrifice of the Mass; the Seven Sacraments; the Invocation of Saints; and other allied topics. These tenets are demonstrably unsupported by the testimony of Christ and His inspired Apostles; and their introduction into the body of the Church's dogmatic teaching was strenuously resisted from age to age by many of the foremost theologians of the Church itself. Some of these tenets, viewed separately, are much less

hurtful than others; but taken together they are fitted to do immeasurable wrong to the souls of men. They offer dishonour to the sole and infinitely perfect Mediatorship of the Lord Jesus Christ. They thrust the Church, the Priest, the Sacraments, the Saints and Angels, between the returning sinner and the infinitely merciful God, who, in and through Christ, is waiting to welcome him; they practically ignore and supersede the office of the Holy Spirit in the work of our salvation; in one word, they tend to transfer, and in numberless instances they *do* transfer, to the creature that trust and homage of the soul which God claims as exclusively His own. Where they are accepted with the unreserved compliance of the heart, they hide Christ as a complete and present Saviour from the sinner's view; and *as far as this is their tendency*, they are not only un-Christian—they are anti-Christian.

#### A NOT INFREQUENT STRUGGLE.

Romanism seeks to bind together, and by the subtle casuistry of the Schools does apparently bind together, these two discordant systems of doctrine. But it cannot make them coalesce notwithstanding. In the inner life of every sincere Roman Catholic one or other set of doctrines must practically govern the religious experience. Through the natural affinity of the human heart for error, and especially for error which was in large measure introduced to meet its predilections, the great bulk of those who constitute the membership of the Church of Rome incline to the Roman doctrine rather than to the

Catholic. Besides, the whole trend of modern Romanism, secretly controlled as it is by the authorities at the Vatican, is in the direction of giving ever-increasing effect to the teaching which almost boastfully aims at bringing the whole world under the complete domination of the Pope and the Roman priesthood. In many an individual conscience, however, among those eager crowds who early and late throng their consecrated chapels—perhaps, in instances not a few, even among those who officiate at the altar, or who pace the silent cloister absorbed in solitary communion with their own spirit—there may be going on, as in the great heart of Luther before his conversion, a life-and-death struggle between these two conflicting elements of a really irreconcilable creed. The Spirit of God can make a little truth go a great way;<sup>1</sup> and it may be that even amid the gross superstitions fostered by the Papacy, a greater number than we might deem probable accept with a true, though tremulous faith, the Evangelical element, and, with it, the mighty and all-sufficient Saviour of whom it testifies.

#### CONTROVERSY.

We do not eschew controversy on what appears to us to be suitable times and occasions; and, indeed, it is generally forced upon us by Roman Catholics themselves, who, as a rule, are adepts in

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<sup>1</sup> It is a noble saying of Bishop Hall—"So then, hold by Christ, though it should be as by a straw; where yet thou holdest on by something else as by a cart rope, that straw will save thee."

stating the claims of their Church. We deliver controversial sermons and lectures as they may seem to be called for; we disseminate controversial literature in which the errors of the Church of Rome are firmly grappled with; and our agents are carefully instructed in the great principles at stake. But in no sense is aggressive controversy our prominent or characteristic agency; we do not make it the pioneer of our work. To do so would be to injure our own spirit; to misinterpret living Protestantism; to expose our aims to suspicion, and in the overwhelming majority of cases to close every avenue of access against us and our message. Controversy may reach the understanding; all experience, however, goes to show that unless conducted with exceptional tact, temper, and spiritual conviction, it may not touch the conscience at all—possibly it may even help to sear it. The Reformation of the 16th Century, in proportion as it was genuine, began in the consciences of the Reformers: it was in seeking deliverance from the weighty load of conscious sin that they struggled into the light and liberty of the full Gospel. The paramount question is—and it is a question for all, Protestants and Roman Catholics alike—“How am I to get rid of this burden of sin?” Roman Catholics have often a keener sense of sin than Protestants have, and perhaps they give more earnest consideration to this great personal inquiry than we do. It is at this point that the most hopeful dealing with them in religious matters is likely to come in. Where God works conviction of sin in any heart, the simplest exhibition of the Gospel oftentimes

illuminates the soul like a ray sent straight from Heaven.

Here let me refer to an important distinction. It is one thing *to deal with Protestants*—Protestants whom we wish to put on their guard against insidious error—on the subject of Romanism; it is another and wholly different thing *to deal on the same subject with Roman Catholics* to whom we seek to make known the fulness and freeness of the great salvation. In the one case—that of Protestants—we must necessarily dwell on the unscriptural character of the Papal or Roman element—and this, of course, necessarily implies the introduction of controversy in some form. Even here, however, there is often very serious harm done to the interests of Protestantism by coarse, vulgar, and oftentimes most ignorant abuse—the Evangelical element being completely ignored.<sup>1</sup> In the other case—that of Roman Catholics—we should adopt the method most likely to commend Christ as the gracious, loving, personal, present, complete Saviour. If we succeed in enthroning *Him* in the hearts of those we seek to benefit, all rival claimants will disappear. Dealt with according to this method—with spontaneity, with appropriateness as to place and occasion, with delicacy, with courtesy, with affectionate interest, and, above all, with the joy of a realized salvation pervading and brightening our own spirit—we shall find that in many, many

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<sup>1</sup>It is probable that the very existence of the "Catholic" as distinguished from the "Roman" element is unknown to some of our more violent Protestant advocates.

instances there is no insuperable barrier in the way of quiet converse with Roman Catholic friends and neighbours about the "Catholic Disease" which has smitten us both equally, and the "Catholic Remedy" which has been provided for us both equally, and which is offered to us both without respect of persons on precisely the same terms.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

OUR PRINCIPLES AND AIMS.—(*Continued*).

II.—WE SEEK TO REGARD OUR ROMAN CATHOLIC FELLOW-COUNTRYMEN AS VICTIMS, RATHER THAN ABETTORS, OF AN OPPRESSIVE SPIRITUAL DESPOTISM.

THE Church of Rome and the Protestant Evangelical Churches substantially agree (*a*) that we *need* salvation; (*b*) that Christ has *provided* salvation for us by His Life and Passion. We mainly differ as to the way in which the blessings of salvation are to be *applied*.

THE APPLICATION OF SALVATION—THE CATHOLIC DOCTRINE.

The Scripture testimony is plain, both of the Old Testament and the New. We are to obtain all these blessings, including pardon, acceptance with God, purity of heart, peace of conscience, strength to overcome temptation, victory over death, and all other spiritual benefits, *directly from God Himself*, or, as it is commonly expressed in the New Testament, *from Christ Himself*, who in a special sense is called our "Saviour." He humbled Himself to purchase salvation for us, not with corruptible things as silver and gold, but with His own precious blood, and He has been exalted to bestow the blessings which He thus secured. In the

economy of Redemption it was His place to purchase, and it is therefore His special prerogative to bestow. It is part of "the joy that was set before Him," for which He endured the cross, despising the shame. He has infinite delight in giving saving gifts unto men, even to the rebellious. For this purpose He invites sinful men to come to Himself. He entreats them to come. He commands them to come. He assures them that He will in no wise cast out any who do come. His compassion, tenderness, condescension, now that He sits upon the throne, are the same as when He dwelt among us as the Man of Sorrows. The way to Him is open, and His salvation is free. The penitent needs to bring nothing with him but the great burden of his sin. No price is required, none could possibly be received. The merit of Christ is enough; it meets, and infinitely more than meets, all the sinner's needs on the one hand, and all the requirements of God's offended majesty on the other. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews sums up the case thus:—"Having therefore" (the quotation is from the Rhemish Testament) "a great High Priest that hath passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we have not a high priest who cannot have compassion on our infirmities, but one tempted in all things like as we are, without sin. Let us go theretofore with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace in seasonable aid." (*Hebrews* iv. 14-16.) There could be no stronger statement of the grand doctrine of the universal priesthood of believers.



## THE APPLICATION OF SALVATION—THE ROMAN DOCTRINE.

All this is compatible with the early (Catholic) portion of the Tridentine Creed. It is, however, not only obscured but largely set aside in the later (or Roman) section of it. According to this later teaching, the way into the gracious presence of God and of His Son Jesus Christ cannot be said to be open to sinful men. To refer only to one point—the Church has interjected itself between the sinner and the Saviour, and to every Roman Catholic the Church practically means the individual priest under whose spiritual care he may happen to be placed. *The blessings of Christ's salvation can reach men only through the Church or the priest*—such is the more modern doctrine. During the Middle Ages—generally known as the Dark Ages—before the printing press had made its appearance, and when there was no influential public opinion in any way fitted to check the ever-increasing pretensions of the clergy, the Roman theologians—in addition to the two simple ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, which Christ Himself had instituted, and into which, it may be remarked in passing, they had introduced an entirely new significance—developed an elaborate system of doctrines and observances, the result of which was, so far as the *imparting* of salvation was concerned, virtually to put the Roman Catholic priesthood in the place of Christ. These observances compassed the whole sphere of human existence, from birth to burial, and it may be for thousands of years afterwards, and during all that incalculable interval the souls and destinies of men

were to be at the mercy of a body of officials of like passions, infirmities, failings as themselves. There was to be no more mention of a present and gratuitous salvation simply to be accepted as the free gift of God with the full and loyal trust of the heart. The penitent must pay a heavy price—a price of merit, a price of money, a price of penitential expiation in this world, or, failing the sufficiency of penance in this world, a price of unimaginable purgatorial torments in the next. As a rule all these prices must be paid, the Church or the priest presiding over the whole tremendous transaction, claiming to exercise all the while the very prerogatives of God Himself. Even were the priests of the Roman Catholic Church all, without exception, the very saintliest of men, this demand which they make upon us would be intolerable. As it is, their claim lays the foundation for one of the most absolutely perfect tyrannies the world has ever known, a tyranny which is certainly not the less reprehensible that it is able to secure the helpless acquiescence of its victims.

If we are not conscious of deep sympathy with our countrymen under this heavy, even if unconscious, burden, in God's name let us leave them alone. We are not fit to represent to them either the spirit or the message of the Gospel. The work is too high for us, and requires an aptitude and delicacy of treatment which we are not able to bring to it. In the absence of patient and loving sympathy we shall prove but bunglers in all our attempts to approach them. But if we are touched with the unconquerable sympathies of Christ, their hearts

will probably prove more responsive to the old, old story than our own would do in similar circumstances. In any case we shall find it impossible to pursue irritating and defiant methods. We shall refuse to carry on a mean, paltry battle of Churches or even of Creeds; and we shall let them see and understand that, as regards the great question of personal religion, we do not contend *against* them at all in any sense, but *for* them; and only against anything and everything that would intercept their way to the merciful Saviour, and rob them of rights which are inherent in their very manhood.

“IRISH FREEDOM.”

It has always seemed to me that there is a very pathetic side to the ceaseless struggles of so many of our countrymen for what they call “Irish Freedom.” They know and feel that they are not free. Under all the circumstances it is not strange that they should be reluctant to learn what it is that holds them down, but they are learning it all the same. The deepest, most subtle, most pervading, most interior hindrance to our national contentment and progress is one that cannot be removed by the legislation of any Parliament either in Westminster or College Green. It is impossible in the very nature of things that Ireland can enjoy real liberty until her children have learned these elementary lessons, that “God alone is lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men;” that Religious Liberty must be the basis of any National Liberty worthy of

the name; and that the very central conception of Religious Liberty, in its highest sense, is the liberty of every man to deal directly with God Himself in everything that concerns his interests as a responsible and immortal being.<sup>1</sup>

III.—WE SET BEFORE US AS OUR GREAT AIM, NOT THE BRINGING OUT OF "CONVERTS" FROM THE CHURCH OF ROME, BUT THE BRINGING OF SINFUL MEN TO CHRIST.

This is a subject on which there are almost as many mistakes made by Protestants as by Roman Catholics. The widespread scepticism that exists among Protestants regarding Missions such as I have been describing arises in large measure from mistaken views as to their special object.

#### PROSELYTISM.

It is hardly necessary to say that we do not undervalue the importance—whether as regards the individual, the family, or the community—of persons "coming out" from the Church of Rome who have ceased to believe in her distinctive doctrines; nor are we without abundant evidence that many *have* come out who had in a hundred

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<sup>1</sup> In carrying on their work, our agents are careful to eschew all political discussions and entanglements. But I feel constrained when referring to this subject at all, to express the ever deepening conviction that the setting up of an "Independent Parliament" in College Green, or anything that might lead to an Independent Parliament, would not only be fatal to the highest and best interests of Ireland, but would be full of the gravest peril to the stability of the British Empire, and to the cause of Protestantism and real liberty throughout the world; the great bulk of the people have no enthusiasm for an Irish Parliament. To most of them "Home Rule" is but a synonym for cheap land.

ways been brought under the influence of Scriptural teaching. But towards "conversion" in this lower sense we do not direct our efforts. It is not in any degree our immediate or determining object. I do not think there is anything that contributes so much to make Irish Roman Catholics unapproachable in religious matters as *the suspicion they entertain of our proselytising aims*. They believe that we have no other object in view than to get them to "come out," and thus aid in swelling the ranks of our alien community. They deserve great credit for scornfully repelling any such design. Unless we can disarm them of this suspicion, there will be, in the great majority of cases, no hopeful access at all for the Gospel message. And the best, if not the only, way to disarm them is to make it sure to ourselves that there is no ground for such suspicion. We must ourselves be penetrated with the conviction—and we must let our Roman Catholic fellow-citizens see that we are penetrated with it—that a mere conversion from Roman Catholicism to any form of Protestantism, in the absence of living, saving faith in the Son of God, is an object for which we would not think it worth while to spend our breath.

If we make proselytism our leading aim, these two results will follow:—First, It will lower the tone of our own testimony; we shall want that natural, unconstrained freedom which is necessary to true persuasiveness. And secondly, It will, if known (and the Irish people are swift to detect the presence of a motive like this), put those whom we seek to instruct into an attitude of opposition and defiance.

They will look upon us as acting under no higher impulse than that of mere sectarian selfishness; and they will pour contempt on our clumsy endeavours to make them deny at once their faith and their country by "turning Protestants." If we are to accomplish any spiritual good among our countrymen, they must be persuaded that we rise above all such aims. We have no unworthy or sinister object in view in speaking to them about "the common salvation." We have no object in view at all except to help them, through the blessing of God, to look to Christ—the one Mediator between God and men—with the supreme trust and confidence of their souls. We desire to bring Christ and our countrymen into immediate and living contact. When He was on earth He was often surrounded by crowds of the sick and dying—blind, halt, maimed, palsied, withered—and the sublimely simple testimony is borne by the Evangelists, that "as many as touched Him," or even "the hem of His garment," "were made perfectly whole." If through loving, patient, tender dealing with the people, we are helpful in encouraging them to touch but the hem of Christ's garment, we have achieved the highest kind of Missionary success. Such a touch—personal, expectant—will bring them healing and salvation. As for their "coming out," we may leave that in God's hands. The Good Shepherd knows His sheep, and He will look after His own.

"PREPARING THE WAY OF THE LORD."

We are not doing much more as yet than sowing

the seed ; the reapers will come after. But it is something to help even in "preparing the way of the Lord." In the meantime we wish the value of our work to be estimated by the *amount of simple Bible truth* we are enabled to scatter over the country rather than by the number of "converts" we may be able to tabulate. Nay, it is quite possible that we might be able to show long lists of certified converts,<sup>1</sup> especially from the more indigent section of the population ; and yet, by the attitude in which we presented Protestantism before the great body of the people, we might be throwing back immensely the general evangelization of the country. And, on the other hand, it is equally possible for us to have but a very limited catalogue of formally enrolled converts, and yet be eminently instrumental in hastening on the day when the warm-hearted people of Ireland shall place the crown of their grateful, loving homage on the head of JESUS alone.

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<sup>1</sup> As a matter of fact, we kept no lists of the kind.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### OUR DIVINE COMMISSION.

THE Plantation of Ulster in the beginning of the 17th Century was an event than which there have been few more momentous in the later history of Ireland. Though the immigrant settlers were not *all* Presbyterians, there are no persons more imperatively called upon to study the history and bearings of that great national transaction than the members of the different Presbyterian Churches. On Irish Presbyterians the obligation is supreme; and it is a matter of much thankfulness that owing to the faithful labours of Reid, Killen, Witherow, Croskery, Hamilton, Heron, Latimer, and other workers in the same field, full and accurate information on the subject has been brought within easy reach of all our people, both old and young.

It is not to be wondered at that in this "land of contradictions," as it has been called, fierce discussions should have ranged themselves round the story of the Plantation. A popular writer of the present day, and a Protestant, has not hesitated to describe it as "the greatest and most oppressive measure of spoliation of which England has been ever guilty."<sup>1</sup> The Roman Catholic view is very

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<sup>1</sup> *Highways and Byeways in Donegal and Antrim.* By Stephen Gwynn (p. 29).



much the same. But these strictures cannot be fairly directed against the Scottish Presbyterians. These immigrants had nothing to do with the "Flight of the Earls," and the confiscation of their estates which followed. That was a matter between the native Irish and the English Government; and our Roman Catholic friends at any rate, when recalling their wrongs in this connection, should bear in mind that it was not the Scottish Presbyterians, but one of their own Popes—Pope Adrian IV., an Englishman—who wedded Ireland to the fortunes or misfortunes of English rule; and that the system of Plantation settlements in Ireland was first inaugurated in the reign of their own Queen Mary. The Province had been reduced to a state of desolation by the internecine strifes of the Irish chieftains and their joint rebellion against the English king before the policy of the Ulster Plantation was adopted; and the contiguity of Scotland naturally drew a large proportion of the colonists from that country.<sup>1</sup> Even so prominent a Nationalist as M'Nevin is courageous enough to say that "no better choice could have been made than the Scotch to form the staff of the colony. They were thrifty, industrious, hungry, avaricious, and persevering, and had made great advances in social improvement, agriculture, and manufactures. They were well adapted to fulfil another object of the Plantation, the creation of an industrious

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<sup>1</sup> It gives much additional interest to the Ulster Plantation to bear in mind that many of the settlers were probably lineal descendants of the Ulster Dalriads, from the Route, who had established a Christian colony in Scotland eleven centuries before.

population in the North, by whose energies and resolution the great natural resources of the country might be turned to the best account. And in this they succeeded fully. In no other part of Ireland can be found the same amount of commercial enterprise and manufacturing activity ; and nowhere else are the peasantry more industrious and frugal, and with so high a standard of social comfort.”<sup>1</sup>

James I., the persistent persecutor of the Church of Scotland, was not the sort of monarch we should have thought likely to found a strong Presbyterian interest in Ireland. But he was the Cyrus whom God “stirred up” for the purpose. In the charter authorizing the Plantation the King mentioned “the work of establishing religion” as one of the objects he had in view: the whole undertaking, however, was undoubtedly prompted by mere statecraft. Not a few God-fearing men were among the colonists ; but, as a rule, they were as little concerned as the King for the interests of vital religion. They certainly did not come as “Missionary volunteers” to prosecute the work of evangelization among the native population : they had other work in hands—to found a home and carve out a future for themselves and their families in a “half empty and desolated Province.” But whatever the aims of James I. and his advisers, and whatever the object

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<sup>1</sup> *Confiscation of Ulster*, pp. 149, 150. The testimony of Lecky should also be borne in mind : “Nothing,” he says, “in Irish history is more remarkable than the entire absence of outrage and violence that followed the Ulster Plantation.” *History of England* II. p. 112.

of the colonists themselves, there are few among us who do not entertain the belief that God had His own higher designs in view. Our Biblical Calvinism helps us to realize the significance of the great truth that "God reigneth," and that in some way inscrutable to us "His Kingdom ruleth over all," even the free wills of His responsible creatures. We and those who have gone before us in the fellowship of the Church have at all times been mastered by the conviction that the hand of God was in the Ulster Plantation; and in our great representative Assemblies, our congregations, and our homes, the prayer has often burst from our hearts as by the irresistible promptings of a common spiritual instinct—"Return, we beseech Thee, O God of Hosts: look down from heaven, and behold and visit this vine, and the vineyard which Thy right hand hath planted, and the branch that Thou hast made strong for Thyself." As an Irish Church, no prayer could be more appropriate for us than this.

By the very fact of the Plantation God spoke to us, and still speaks to us, as clearly and authoritatively as He spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai. It is probable that every Church has its own special commission, which it is under special obligation to interpret and obey. There is no uncertainty about ours. Over and above our share of responsibility as regards the great commission—"Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature"—God has given us a commission that is *distinctively*, and it might even be said (as far as the Presbyterian Churches of the world are concerned), *exclusively*

our own.<sup>1</sup> Can anyone who believes in Providence at all doubt that the Waldensian Church, amid its Alpine fastnesses, has a special commission to the people of Italy? That Church does not herself doubt it. She has heard the Divine call, and accepted the honourable task it assigns her as one of the great spiritual forces at work in that beautiful land. She would be unfaithful to her exalted Head, to the Italian people, and to the just expectations of Christendom, if she failed to catch the inspiration of her grand Missionary motto—“*Lux lucet in Tenebris*” (“the Light shines in the Darkness”). I have long had an intense and ever-growing conviction that our case, in all essential respects, is almost precisely similar. We also have been placed in a land sitting in darkness—among other reasons, pre-eminently for this, that we might be a friendly Light in the Darkness. The Presbyterian Churches of the world seem to take the same view of our position. They do not attempt to work in this Irish field, though they have as high a realization as we have—perhaps even a higher—of its commanding importance. *They leave it to us.* They take for granted that in an absolutely unique sense the obligation and responsibility are ours. They do not intrude on what they naturally regard as our domain. As a Church, we have again and again solemnly recognized the obligation—we have accepted the

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<sup>1</sup>It is hardly necessary to explain how fully I recognise the important work which is being carried on in Ireland by other Evangelical Churches and agencies. My present object, however, is to emphasize the duty which devolves on the members of the Presbyterian Church.

high and honourable responsibility. In the brotherhood of the Presbyterian Churches of Christendom, we acknowledge this work to be one which is *primarily, distinctively, characteristically ours*. It was a work specially assigned to us from the day we first landed on the shores of Ulster. Our duty came with us, even if at the time it was only very partially recognized. And did not God give us an early foretaste and pledge of His accompanying presence when He baptized our infant Church in the valley of the Sixmilewater with a plenteous baptism of the Holy Ghost? "Thus saith the Lord: I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown." Ireland is our own land now in a sense it was not then. The experience of God's goodness towards us for well-nigh three hundred years of struggle and change has bound us to the country by many a sacred tie. We are no passing strangers—no casual visitors. We are permanent citizens. Ireland has become the land of our affections, and of our most loyal devotion; and it is part of our very religion to labour in every way we can think of for its spiritual well-being.

There have been many "plantations" in Ireland made by English statesmen mainly in the interests of their own country. In most of these cases the great majority of the Protestant settlers and their families were ultimately drawn into the vortex of the popular religion. Not so with the sturdy sons of Scottish Presbytery. Under the influence of an uncompromising Biblical creed and a form of

worship almost stern in its unpretentious simplicity, they held together in unbroken phalanx, though surrounded by hostile influences of the most formidable kind, and soon came to be recognized as the most unassailable fortress of Evangelical Protestantism in the country. Writing in 1844 in the (Edinburgh) *Witness* with reference to the attempt then being made to invalidate Presbyterian marriages, Hugh Miller declared that our Church in Ireland occupied "a position as important as has been occupied by any one British Church since the Reformation;" and that God had placed it "in the very Thermopylæ of Protestantism." In many ways we have brought blessing to the land of our adoption. All down our history we have sought in some degree to witness for Gospel truth among our Celtic fellow-countrymen. Great and good men of past generations were honoured to bring this department of our work into ever-increasing prominence, and probably at no time has there been among us a deeper sense than there is to-day of the urgency of the duty to which we are called by the essentially Missionary position we occupy. We have helped and stimulated the national industries; we have largely promoted the cause of popular education, though others have succeeded in getting larger material benefit out of our efforts than we have got ourselves; we have set an example of steady and self-reliant enterprise; we have covered a considerable section of the land with churches and schoolhouses; and, perhaps as much as any ecclesiastical community around us, we have trained a substantial peasantry "to do

justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with their God." But have the purposes of God regarding us, when He planted us here as an Irish Church, mainly in Ulster—have they been accomplished? Have we fulfilled our destiny? Nay, we are only beginning to realize it. Our past days have been but days of preparation, and unless God has a great controversy with us, our best work as Christian patriots lies before us.

I had intended to refer to some additional topics which have an intimate bearing on the general subject I have been trying to discuss. But I find it necessary to draw these imperfect chapters to a somewhat summary close. I truly regard them as very inadequate, but I venture affectionately to dedicate them with all these imperfections to the Young Men and Women of the Irish Presbyterian Church. May God make their hearts aglow with the love of Ireland and of her interesting but easily misguided people. I have often felt that times of gracious revival from the presence of the Lord might possibly come to us as a Church in connection with this Mission, which presents itself to not a few mainly as an object of suspicion. After attending one of our happy Irish Mission conferences in the General Assembly (some of the colporteurs were present), Dr. George D. Mathews, General Secretary of the Pan-Presbyterian Alliance, wrote:—"Let me thank you very sincerely for permission to be present at your conference. Now that I know what such a conference means, *I think I would cross the Atlantic to attend a similar meeting.*" Regarding another conference of the same kind

held in Dublin, a devoted elder wrote:—"How little we know sometimes, I thought as the evening went on, of what is being already done, when in our snatched moments of meditation we lay ideal plans for the regeneration of the race. Those plans of ours may be already in operation as nearly our ideals as they can be in the hands of imperfect human instruments. *And here was one of them.*" Many others have borne similar testimony.

Taking a survey of the entire situation, and of the peculiar difficulties of the Irish work, I am free to say that I question if any Church in this or any other land possesses facilities for prosecuting it greater than those which God has graciously laid to our hand.<sup>1</sup> We hold, and we hold forth, the old imperishable Gospel message of a free salvation, which at once exalts God and humbles the sinner. We recognise the church of the regenerate to be, in the ultimate sense, the one and only Church of Christ to which the promises belong. We are free from all the entanglements that necessarily cluster around the idea of a human priesthood. We were never reckoned as belonging to "the ascendancy." And the Irish Roman Catholic people know better than we think that for generations we lay under disabilities practically the same as their own; and

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<sup>1</sup> I am referring here to organized, permanent Church work. As regards private influence and effort, some of the most devoted, self-denying, successful workers in this field I have ever known were not members of our communion at all. All the same they recognized the truth of what I am saying as to the wholly exceptional advantages possessed by the Presbyterian Church.



that in seeking to get rid of our own burdens we did not hesitate to extend a brotherly helping hand to *them*. In such work as Colportage our Church is pre-eminently fitted to supply the sort of man we need—sensible, fairly educated, with a grip of systematic Bible truth, self-respecting, not above their work, and more than all (for this is supreme), with the fear of God and the love of Christ in their hearts. I thank God that contemporaneously with the remarkable awakening of the national mind which recent years have developed,<sup>1</sup> there is a corresponding awakening of the conscience of our Christian people in reference to this great Home enterprise. It has been said that the plant never grew that could heal the festering sores of Ireland. But it is growing, for all that. The malady is, indeed, too deep to be successfully treated by the statesmen of any party,<sup>2</sup> or of all parties combined. They cannot even diagnose the disease. Christ must drive out this demon of strife and discontent. Christ must give the people rest. Christ must make them free. And He will. But He puts the high honour upon us of co-operating with Him, and under Him, in bringing about this gracious consummation. May it be given to us of

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<sup>1</sup> C. N. B., in *Leader*, May 27, 1902, says:—"The days of unquestioning faith in the priest are dying."

<sup>2</sup> The history of Ireland has for many generations been a blurred (and blotted) one. It is vain for any one party—political or religious—to ask to throw the blame wholly upon the other. There have been faults all round, and it is one of the best symptoms that this is more generally acknowledged than it ever was before.

God's great mercy to seize and plead the promise which in a real sense belongs to Ireland no less than to Israel: "Thou shalt no more be termed FORSAKEN; neither shall thy land any more be termed DESOLATE: but thou shalt be called HEPHZI-BAH, and thy land BEULAH: for the Lord delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married." Isa. lxii. 4.

## NOTES.

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### A.—DR. MACLEOD'S VISIT TO THE WEST.

"Dr. MacLeod came to the conclusion that Gaelic preachers would not, in the first instance, be understood by the people; but he thought that in the course of a few months they might be qualified."—*Missionary Sermons and Speeches*, p. 158.

### B.—DR. MACLEOD'S IRISH PSALTER.

The Assembly's Dublin Mission Library contains a copy of Dr. MacLeod's Irish Psalter. It bears on its title page the name of Thaddeus Connellan along with that of Dr. MacLeod. Thaddeus Connellan was a distant relative of "Father" Thomas Connellan, the well-known Editor of *The Catholic*. In *The Irish Mission Field* for February, 1890—a copy of which is also preserved in the Dublin Mission Library—some interesting incidents are given in regard to this Psalter.

### C.—AN IRISH SCHOOL.

"What a subject for a painter," says the Rev. Henry M'Manus, writing from Kerry, "would such a scene afford! A picture in which would be seen an aged Kerry peasant with a tattered black frieze coat and open breast; an aged matron, hitherto an oracle in all the *pishogues* and 'legendary lore' of the neighbourhood; a number of youths, both male and female, who had hitherto ran wild through the hills—all assembled together in their humble dwelling, with the pig in the corner, and perhaps a little cow on the floor—and these, while one held a blazing bog-deal as candle, reading the Word of God in their mother tongue, would, indeed, be a subject worthy of the pencil of the old masters."—*M. H.*, 1840, pp. 5, 6.

### D.—STUDENTS' MISSIONARY ASSOCIATION.

The following were the Secretaries during the earlier years of the Association:—Hamilton Brown Wilson (1845-'46), Hamilton Magee

(1846-'47, 1847-'48), (William Henderson, Edinburgh Branch); John Hall (1848-'49); Joseph Donaldson, Lowry Edmunds Berkeley W. J. Gillespie. There is some confusion here regarding the dates.

E.—MR. D. K. CLARKE.

In the Home Mission Report (1845) Dr. Edgar writes :—"The individual, above all men living, to whom the funds of the Presbyterian Mission owe most is Mr. D. K. Clarke. In Ireland, England, and Scotland this is so well known, that none will dispute his claim. For years he devoted to the sacred cause his time, strength, and substance, and he did all without pecuniary acknowledgment of any kind. This the Directors saw could not, and should not, continue. In common honesty they could not permit such self-sacrifice; and they have, therefore, compelled Mr. Clarke to receive from them a return for his future services—small, however, and very inadequate." —*M. H.*, 1845, p. 240.

F.—MULLAFARY CONGREGATION AND 1798.

"The village of Mullafarragh, a colony of industrious Presbyterian weavers from Ulster, on pretence of searching for arms, was ransacked in three nocturnal invasions of the rebels, till there was nothing left in it worth carrying away; and this in spite of a protection under the hand of the commandant, obtained for them and their pastor by the bishop."—*Gordon's History of the Irish Rebellion*, p. 319. It is said that their "meeting-house" was "utterly demolished."

G.—THE "SEE OF KILLALA."

In Ecclesiastical histories, guide-books, etc., Patrick is generally represented as having founded the "See of Killala." The statement, as popularly understood, is wholly misleading. A "see" implies a diocese and a prelate who has jurisdiction over both clergy and laity within its bounds. It is acknowledged by Episcopal writers that in this sense there was not in Ireland any see, diocese, or prelate till the 12th century. All these things came in with the Papacy. This much misunderstood subject is ably discussed by Professor Heron in his interesting volume, *The Celtic Church in Ireland* (Part III., Chapter IX.).

## H.—THE “WOOD OF FOCLUT.”

“The situation of this wood, or woody district, has never been accurately pointed out by any of our writers. Ussher, indeed, says loosely that it is in Mayo, but its exact position is evident from the places said to be in it which retain their names to this day, as the Church of Crosspatrick, which is still the name of a townland and graveyard situated to the right of the road as you go from Ballina to Killala, and within one mile of the latter; also the Church of Domnach mor, which has long since disappeared, but the name remains which determines its locality, being that of a townland situated in the parish of Killala, in the barony of Tirawley.”—O'Donovan's *Hy-Fiachrach*, p. 463.

## J.—ROBERT JOHNSTON.

In his report to the Assembly (1854), Dr. Edgar wrote of this good man :—“Robert Johnston, one of the most devoted and best Scripture readers, lately died at his post, near Mullafary. As the last scene of his sufferings drew to a close, the girls who served in his industrial school could not be persuaded to work, and their hearts melted with grief for their beloved dying father, over whose lowly grave they have since shed many a tear. During his last illness he had high hope that showers were to come down from that heaven which had long been to him as brass; and though he did not live to see it, the expected blessing came.”—*M. H.*, August, 1854, pp. 2194-5. Dr. Edgar here refers to an encouraging work of grace which took place among the young people in 1853-54. It was much more pronounced during the ministry of my successor, Rev. John Wilson (afterwards of Brisbane). He wrote to tell me of a shipload of young men and women belonging to Mullafary congregation who had just set sail from Killala for America, the great bulk of whom he believed to have been savingly converted to God.

## K.—REV. EDWARD M. DILL, M.D.

Though not immediately connected with the Connaught Mission, Dr. Dill prominently helped in its establishment. He was appointed in 1846 as “General Itinerating Missionary,” in connection with the Home Mission (including the Irish Mission), that he might devote himself to the sustaining and strengthening of the Missionary work

already begun in the South and West, and the extending of it, as far as possible, to new districts. In the *M. H.*, November, 1846, the same number in which Dr. Edgar's *Cry for Connaught* first appeared, he states his reasons for accepting this appointment. "I never could look," he says, "to our country on the one hand and our Church on the other without feeling the deep conviction that Ireland was our great work." The whole statement is marked by a noble and self-denying patriotism. He subsequently visited the work in Connaught, and he says regarding his visit—"Never did I spend two months in labour so deeply interesting or solemnly impressive as in that province" (*M. H.*, October, 1848). Dr. Dill was probably the most eloquent, Irish Missionary whom our Church ever sent into the Home Field.

#### L.—PERVERSIONS TO ROMANISM.

Further testimony on this subject is given in the graphic letters of "A Milesian"—Rev. Henry M'Manus—(*M. H.*, 1843, pp. 43, 75, 76); by Drs. Edgar and Kirkpatrick, acting as a Deputation from the General Assembly to the South and West of Ireland (*M. H.*, 1843, pp. 61-63; *Memoir of Dr. Edgar*, pp. 195-8); by Rev. Joseph Fisher, of Galway (*M. H.*, 1844, pp. 105, 106, 122); by Rev. James Denham, of Derry (*Missionary Sermons and Speeches*, pp. 143-149); by Rev. Henry M'Manus (*Recollections of Irish Highlands*, pp. 67-68); by Rev. Thomas Armstrong (*M. H.*, 1889, p. 396); and by many others.

#### M.—DR. EDGAR AND THE "RISING" OF 1848.

Dr. Edgar used still stronger words than those quoted in the text: "Charity," he writes, "flowed in upon the land like a river, yet many of her people are ungrateful; and while multitudes of kind hearts were bleeding for their wretchedness, they were thirsting for blood—a paternal, generous Government were pouring blessings on their heads, while they were preparing rebellion, plunder, and slaughter; a God of infinite goodness kept them alive in famine, and in pestilence redeemed them from death, yet they still profane His name and His Sabbaths; they lie, and deceive, and are perjured; they reject His Word, and receive for doctrines the commandments of men; slaves of superstition and of priestcraft, and the ready dupes

of every impostor, their lands are untilled, their hands are idle, their habits are reckless, their characters are unprincipled, their whole condition—domestic, social, political, religious—a by-word and an execration" (*M. H.*, October, 1848, p. 603). This tremendous indictment occurs in an appeal on behalf of the Annual Collection for the Home Mission (which at the time included the Irish Mission). The appeal does not contain Dr. Edgar's signature as Convener, but there can be no doubt regarding the authorship.

O.—DUBLIN "MISSION CHURCH."

I am free to admit that this designation was not an altogether satisfactory one (I refer to the *name* only, not to the *fact* of Church organization), but no other name seemed to present itself. The phrase "Mission Church" was certainly fitted, in the circumstances, to ward off some who might have been disposed to join us, and whose Christian help we should have greatly valued. Even genuine "converts" from the Church of Rome did not, as a rule, care to band themselves together before the unfriendly gaze and suspicion of the public. Besides, as generally used, the term "Mission Church" suggested the idea of a Church intended for the poorer classes of the community, those whom, absurdly enough, we are wont to call "Mission people," as if there were not crowds of "Mission people" in our splendid drawing-rooms. It has been the bane of much excellent Missionary work carried on in Ireland in this special department that it has been so prominently identified with Soup Kitchens, Ragged Schools, Night Asylums, Free Breakfasts, and kindred efforts for the relief of extreme destitution. There are no more Christ-like enterprises among us than well-conducted Missions to the very poor, but such work is of necessity wholly exceptional in its character. Our "Mission Church" was not constructed on any basis of the kind; and, from a national point of view, it is an error of the first magnitude to encourage the idea that an "Irish Mission" aims in any special sense at the more indigent section of the population, or that it is associated with methods that have the appearance of bribery.

P.—"JERVIS STREET FUND."

In the year 1880 it became evident that we were likely to become involved in litigation with the managers of the adjoining hospital

as to the party-wall between the two properties; and on the strong advice of our solicitor, Mr. Matthew Anderson, it was agreed that in the circumstances it was advisable to accept the offer of the representatives of the hospital, and to dispose of the church building. We received from them £2,250 (a sum exceeding the original cost of the building), together with the pews and all moveable fittings, value for £250 more. This sum was paid to the Trustees—Dr. John Denham and myself—and lodged (as the law required) with the Commissioners of Charitable Donations and Bequests. A sum of £200 remaining due to the Assembly's Treasurer was repaid; about £120 was expended in putting the new premises in order; the balance of about £1,930 remaining with the Commissioners for the use of the charity, under the designation of the "Jervis Street Fund." After deciding to leave Jervis Street, we had resolved, for a variety of reasons, to transfer our work to the south-east district of the city. The building in Great Brunswick Street, originally erected as a French Protestant Church, was found to be available. It was in the centre of the district, and was almost of the same dimensions as our church in Jervis Street. The Trustees after some time obtained a lease of the building for 900 years, at the yearly rent of £30.

#### Q.—MISSION PRESS PUBLICATIONS.

The following, besides other papers, have been issued from time to time in connection with the Mission Press:—

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| <i>Conversation with a Priest.</i> By C. M.  | <i>A Recent Conversion.</i> By a Colporteur.   |
| <i>The True Church of Christ.</i> By H. M.   | <i>Christ is All.</i> By R. A.   |
| <i>Life and Doctrine of St. Patrick.</i> By W. D. Killen, D.D.                         | <i>One Mediator.</i> By H. M.  |
| <i>St. Patrick and the Old Religion of Ireland.</i> By the Right Hon. W. Brooke, LL.D. | <i>Go to Headquarters.</i>   |
| <i>Ritualism in Ulster.</i> By J. F., Kingscross.                                      | <i>The Discharge in Full.</i> By H. T. D.  |
| <i>Life of Father Chiniquy.</i>  | <i>Struggling Out of Rome</i> (the Experience of an Elder of the Free Church of Scotland).   |
| <i>Questions for Thinkers.</i> By H. M.  | <i>The Good Priest.</i> (Plates presented by the Author, through George Müller, of Bristol.) |
| <i>History of a Turncoat.</i> Reprinted from <i>Plain Words.</i>                       |  |



*The Good Priest* (Irish).  
*Life of the B. V. Mary* (with  
 Brief Notes). From the Douay  
 (Rhemish) Testament.

"*God Save Ireland.*" (Tenth  
 Thousand). By Magedha.

*What is Protestantism ?* By  
 H. M.

PLAIN PAPERS FOR THE IRISH  
 PEOPLE, viz. :—

*The Vatican Council and its  
 Probable Results.* By  
 H. M.

*Facts in Irish History.* By  
 the Rev. Dr. Kirkpatrick.

*Young Ireland.* By the Rev.  
 Thomas Croskery.

*Is Protestantism Able to  
 Maintain Itself in Ireland?*  
 By the Rev. J. M. Rodgers.

*The Poor Man's Religion.*  
 By the Rev. Wm. Magill,  
 D.D.

*The Presbyterians and the Pope ;  
 or, America's Letter to the  
 Pope.*

*The Scripture Doctrine of the  
 Remission of Sins.* By the  
 Rev. Wm. Irwin.

*What is NOT in the Douay Testa-  
 ment.* (Reprint from the  
*Catholic Layman.*)

*Infallibility in a Nutshell.* By  
 H. M.

*Two Letters Addressed to Arch-  
 bishop M'Cabe on the Jubilee.*  
 By H. M.

*Roman Catholicism : its Origin  
 and Development.* By Magedha.

*Where was Protestantism before  
 Luther ?* By H. M.

*Is Protestantism a Negation ?* By  
 H. M.

LECTURES FOR THE TIMES,  
 viz. :—

*What Ireland Needs.* By  
 the Rev. L. E. Berkeley.

*Ritualism : its Root and  
 Remedy.* By the Rev. D.  
 M'Kee.

*Priestism.* By the Rev. Dr.  
 Kirkpatrick.

*Ireland and St. Patrick.* By  
 H. M.

*The Present Crisis of Pro-  
 testantism in England.* By  
 the Rev. J. Dodd.

COURSE OF LECTURES (1873-  
 74), viz. :—

*Ireland for Christ.* By the  
 Rev. Dr. Kirkpatrick.

*The Conference of the Evan-  
 gelical Alliance in New  
 York.* By the Rev. W.  
 F. Stevenson, D.D.

*The True Power of Pro-  
 testantism.* By the Rev.  
 William Magill.

*Some Things Irishmen Need  
 to Learn.* By the Rev.  
 D. M'Kee, M.A.

*The Prospects of Protestantism  
 throughout the World.* By  
 the Rev. J. S. M'Intosh,  
 M.A.

*Christian Union in Ireland.*  
 By Professor Smyth, D.D.

*Oua Ireland.* (Various Years.)  
 Edited by Rev. H. Magee.

*St. Patrick's Day* (17th March).  
 Various Years.

*Plain Words.* Volumes. (Various  
 Years).

*Key of Truth.* Volumes (1880,  
 1881, 1882).

- Presbyterian Churchman.* Vols. (1877, 1878).
- Christian Irishman.* Volumes (1883 and onwards).
- A Motto for My Countrymen.* By the Rev. John Wilson.
- Hymns by Madame Guyon.*
- Were our Fathers Justified in Leaving the Church of Rome at the Reformation?* By H. M.
- St. Patrick* (a Ballad). By A. S. (a Colporteur).
- The Call of the Master to Erin.* By A. S. (a Colporteur).
- How and What Paul Preached.* By L. E. B.
- The Way to Calvary is Free.*
- A Few Facts Respecting the Roman Catholic Testament.*
- Our Liberties.* By the Rev. A. R. Crawford, LL.B.
- The Faith of St. Patrick.* By the Rev. S. Prenter, M.A.
- Ireland and the Gospel.* By the Rev. Jackson Smyth, D.D.
- The Colporteur in Ireland.* By W. G. Blaikie, D.D.
- Old Ireland Almanac.* (Various Years.) Edited by the Rev. H. Magee and the Rev. C. H. Irwin.
- Four Weighty Reasons Why I am Not a Roman Catholic.* By the Rev. H. Magee.
- Erin's Old Song of Peace.* By the Rev. H. Bonar, D.D.
- Ireland: its Special Difficulties and Claims.* By the Rev. H. Magee. (By permission of the Pan-Presbyterian Council.)

Many of these publications are now out of print. For copies in stock apply to the Editor of *The Christian Irishman*, 16, Upper Sackville Street, Dublin.

#### R.—“IRELAND AND THE BIBLE.”

Roman Catholic Ireland is virtually a land without the Bible. In England and Scotland, the Roman clergy indignantly deny that such is the case, but they dare hardly say so with the same vehemence in Ireland itself. There is no such thing known in Ireland as any real effort on the part of the clergy to have the Word of God circulated among their flocks in any version whatever. Messrs. Duffy, of Dublin, and other publishers issue the Douay Scriptures (with the usual “Notes”), but the priests do not encourage their general circulation as far as the peasantry are concerned, and the price is practically prohibitive. The sale of these copies is said to be considerable in the Colonies. Our colporteurs seldom, almost never, find a Bible or a New Testament in the homes of the people. Any copies found in their cabins may (almost with certainty) be traced to outside Protestant agency. Strictly speaking, the special personal permission of the priest is neces-

sary before any Roman Catholic may dare read the Bible. The people (the older people especially) who have not been brought under the influence of more liberalizing ideas look on the Bible as an "uncanny" book which they had best let alone. The priest is their Bible. The late Encyclical of the Pope (Leo. XIII.), recommending the study of the Holy Scriptures, seemed to be at the inauguration of a new day, but it came to nothing as far as Ireland was concerned. The penny "Gospels" published by the Catholic Truth Society, with the imprimatur of Cardinal Vaughan, have but a limited circulation in Ireland. It is not too much to say that they are not meant for Ireland. The "Notes" are specially adapted for use in England. The Church of Rome cannot approve of the free circulation of the Holy Scriptures, inasmuch as it involves an appeal to the private judgment, which is but another name for the personal intelligence of the reader, according to Roman doctrine; and the exercise of private judgment in matters directly or indirectly affecting religion is treason against the Papacy. Ireland will never get the Bible from the Roman Catholic clergy.

#### S.—THE TRIDENTINE CREED.

##### a.—THE OLD SECTION.

(*Nicaea, A.D., 325; Constantinople, A.D. 381.*)

"I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible: and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made: who, for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man: and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried, and the third day he rose again, according to the Scriptures: and ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father. And He shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead: whose kingdom shall have no end. And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, who spake by the Prophets. And I

believe in one Catholic and Apostolic Church. I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins ; and I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen."

*b.—THE NEW SECTION.*

*(The Council of Trent sat A.D. 1545-63.)*

"I.—I most steadfastly admit and embrace Apostolic and Ecclesiastical Traditions, and all other observances and constitutions of the same Church.

"II.—I also admit the Holy Scriptures, according to that sense which our Holy Mother, the Church, has held and does hold, to which it belongs, to judge of the true sense and interpretation of the Scriptures; neither will I ever take and interpret them otherwise than according to the unanimous consent of the Fathers.

"III.—I also profess that there are truly and properly seven sacraments of the new law instituted by Jesus Christ our Lord, and necessary for the salvation of mankind, though not all for every one; to wit, Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, Orders, and Matrimony, and that they confer grace; and that of these, Baptism, Confirmation, and Orders cannot be reiterated without sacrilege; and I also receive and admit the received approved ceremonies of the Catholic Church, used in the solemn administration of all the aforesaid Sacraments.

"IV.—I embrace and receive all and every one of the things which have been defined and declared in the Holy Council of Trent concerning Original Sin and Justification.

"V.—I profess, likewise, that in the Mass there is offered to God a true, proper, and propitiatory sacrifice for the living and the dead; and that in the most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist there are truly, really, and substantially, the body and blood, together with soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ; and that there is made a conversion of the whole substance of the bread into the body, and of the whole substance of the wine into the blood; which conversion the Catholic Church calls Transubstantiation. I also confess that under either kind alone, Christ is received whole and entire, and a true Sacrament.

"VI.—I constantly hold that there is a Purgatory, and that the souls detained therein are helped by the suffrages of the faithful.

"VII.—Likewise, that the saints, reigning together with Christ, are to be honoured and invoked ; and that they offer prayers to God for us ; and that their relics are to be held in veneration.

"VIII.—I most firmly assert that the Images of Christ, of the Mother of God, ever Virgin, and also of other Saints, may be had and retained ; and that due honour and veneration are to be given them.

"IX.—I also affirm that the power of Indulgences was left by Christ in the Church, and that the use of them is most wholesome to Christian people.

"X.—I acknowledge the Holy, Catholic, Apostolic, Roman Church, for the Mother and Mistress of all Churches, and I promise and swear true obedience to the Bishop of Rome, successor of St. Peter, Prince of the Apostles, and Vicar of Jesus Christ.

"XI.—I likewise undoubtedly receive and profess all other things delivered, defined, and declared by the Sacred Canons and General Councils, and particularly by the Holy Council of Trent ; and I condemn, reject, and anathematize all things contrary thereto, and all heresies which the Church condemned, rejected, and anathematized.

"XII.—I, N. N., do at this present freely profess, and sincerely hold this true Catholic faith, without which no one can be saved ; and I promise most constantly to retain and confess the same entire and inviolate, with God's assistance, to the end of my life. And I will take care, as far as in me lies, that it shall be held, taught, and preached by my subjects, or by those the care of whom shall appertain to me in my situation. This I promise, vow, and swear. So help me God, and these holy Gospels of God."

*Two other Articles have been added since—(a) "THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION" (A.D. 1854), and (b) "PAPAL INFALLIBILITY" (A.D. 1870). Additional Articles may be added in the future as the Pope, without a Council, may determine.*



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Fifty years in "The Irish  
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